cinema canada

Canadian Film Awards: Opinions

#43

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The Silent Partner: Drabinsky and Williams B.S.C.

Scriptwriting: a survey and a comment

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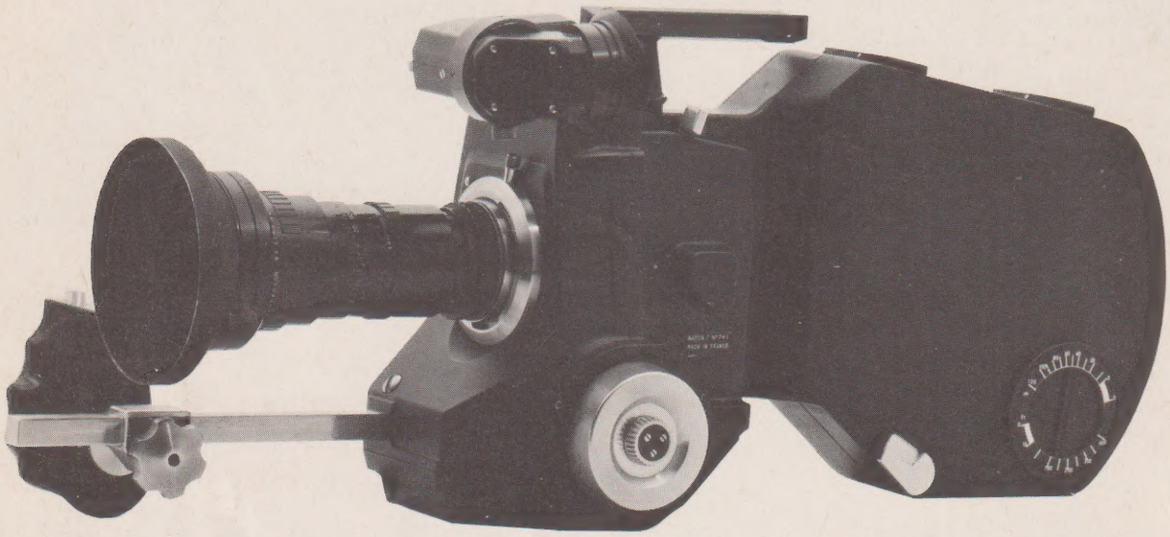

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December 1977/January 1978
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The best laid plans...

Unfortunately, lack of space has obliged us to hold back the announced articles concerning scriptwriting until issue no. 44 (which will be out in mid-January). Then, readers can ponder the facts in Gordon Roback's survey of film professionals as they are asked about scriptwriting, and can get a feel – with a little help from Douglas Bowie – about the tensions involved when one tries to write for film.

Issue no. 43 does include an additional section about Martin Delfalco's film, **Cold Journey.** This section was sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs, in conjunction with the National Film Board of Canada.

REVERB

Second to None

After reading Issue No. 41 of **Cinema Canada**, specifically the interview with Mr. Ousama Rawi, I would suggest that if Mr. Mark Irwin wishes to pursue a career in journalistic writing he should at least attempt to report facts rather than what he believes to have taken place.

I refer to the statement regarding the lack of confidence in Canadian labs by Ossie Morris "during the shooting of **Equus**".

Mr. Morris did indeed voice this opinion at a CSC gathering to which he had been invited to speak, but his remarks were based on a visual observation while touring several labs in Canada prior to the shoot and before one inch of test film had been passed through any of them. He subsequently chose Film House as his service lab after viewing the excellent quality of his camera tests and the whole production was completed to his satisfaction.

The attached letter from Ossie is testimony to this fact and as contributors to your publication, we at Film House request that it be published verbatim to set the record straight.

It should be obvious to everyone that your magazine is read by visiting producers as well as the home market, and that any derogatory remarks relating to the profession can have an adverse effect on all attempts to build a feature industry in Canada.

In my opinion, based on thirty years of experience, the calibre of technicians at Film House and other major Canadian laboratories is second to none, and given the opportunity they can compete favorably with any others in the world.

W.H. Hambley
Laboratory Manager
Film House
Toronto

Doug MacDonald, Esq.,
President.
Film House.
22 Front Street West, Toronto, Ontario,

As you know, principal photography on this picture was completed both under schedule and budget.

I will not recall in this letter all that went on before we started shooting. Let the history books tell that – it will make most interesting reading!

However, I would like to put on record before I leave this country, the fact that I quite positively made the right decision to have your company take care of our processing and 'front end' printing.

The quality of the work that you have produced for us during our very happy stay here has been beyond my wildest dreams. I know I speak for Sidney Lumet, Colin Brewer and Tony Walton as well, when I say that we could not have been more pleased.

I cannot close this letter without mentioning the name of Dave Herrington. In my view he is a top world class technician and I cannot praise his contribution too highly. He really 'cared' about ***Equus,*** *working very long hours, and the results he produced are quite outstanding.*

Finally, I would like you to thank all those 'backroom' boys, many of whom work during the night. Without them, a laboratory cannot operate properly. In my book they were all terrific.

Oswald Morris

With regard to the views expressed by both Ossie Morris and Bill Hambley in reference to the quality and craftsmanship of Film House and its service, I can only say that I am in total agreement with both gentlemen. The inference that Mr. Morris was dissatisfied with Canadian labs "during" the production of **Equus** was based on his remarks at a CSC meeting, held very early in the shooting schedule. At that time, the feature I was shooting, **Starship Invasions,** was also being processed at Film House and I was personally very happy with the footage. Fortunately, as it turned out, Mr. Morris shared my enthusiasm and I am as thankful as he is for the excellent results produced by Film House.

I believe that most Canadian cameramen and producers are proud of the way their work is handled by Canadian labs and we all are honored that Mr. Morris' "wildest dreams" had been surpassed right here in Toronto. Our hopes are that he will return and more producers will join him.

I end in agreement: Canadian labs and Canadian technicians can compete favourably with any others in the world.

Yours truly,
Mark Irwin
Ovation Films
Toronto

Misrepresentation

A letter by Kirwan Cox under the title "Inalienable Right to Sell Out" in a recent issue of Cinema Canada makes an erroneous reference to the PTN Pay Television Network Limited proposal for a Canadian pay television system.

Considering the dialogue and research applied to pay television by the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, I am indeed surprised that one of the architects of the CCFM Pay TV "plan" misrepresents the PTN proposal.

Mr. Cox dismisses the 15 per cent of gross revenue levy suggested by Madame Sauvé as being inadequate, and says that PTN "raised the ante" to 25 per cent.

In fact, PTN adopted the 15 per cent of gross revenue levy (which would amount to approximately $80 million over five years), and furthermore, undertook to air at least 25 per cent Canadian content in the first year of operation.

If Mr. Cox reviewed the PTN proposal, I think even he might agree that additional revenues to the Canadian film production industry in the amount of approximately $15 million per year (on an unlevered basis), and a firm commitment in the first year to devote 25 per cent of the Pay TV channel's time to Canadian content represents a real potential stimulus for the Canadian film production industry.

Colin D. Watson
President
Pay Television Network Limited
Toronto

My letter was written from my memory of the Pay Television Network position presented at the Pay-TV hearings. Naturally, I don't want to misrepresent anyone, so I checked the transcript which included the following exchange:

"Mr. Johnson (CRTC counsel): *... but your indication is that 15% of the gross would go into Canadian production.*

Can I assume that if you run into problems you will come back to the Commission... and you would ask for relief on that point?

Mr. Watson: *... I'm sure we'll find ourselves in coming back to the Commission and finding that the Commission can move the figure up from 15% to 25% because we've been more successful than we thought we were going to be.*

I guess it cuts both ways.

Mr. Johnson: *Yes, but let's be gloomy for a moment though and assume it's bad, and you come back and say you've got to cut it back from 15% to 2% for a couple of years. How would you expect this Commission to react?*

Or is that not a fair question?

Mr. Watson: *Maybe I'm optimistic, and I don't expect that to happen.*

You know, we were very mindful of the experiences of many broadcasting companies in their appearances before this Commission and the promises that were made...

We tried to be extremely conservative.

Mr. Johnson: *Right. But I'm suggesting the Commission would have limited power to enforce a 15%, and we might get down the road a couple years in this kind of system, and I think you'd concede that the Commission would be more or less tied to your success.*

Mr. Watson: *I don't know how to respond. I mean, I find the whole thing so hypothetical, I really do..."*

Due to a faulty memory, I must apologize to Colin for prematurely anticipating PTN's increase in its Canadian production fund to 25%.

Kirwan Cox
Toronto

Politics at Play?

Just returned from seeing **Who Has Seen The Wind** and I must share my feeling of pride, after leaving the theatre, to have been associated in some small way with the industry which produced a film with such high production values. At the same time, I must also express some dismay that this film was snubbed by the jury at the recent Canadian Film Awards. Had it Truffaut's or Jutra's name on it and were it burdened by sub-titles, I firmly believe that the international critics would have rushed to praise it, and that the CFA would have lavished a number of prizes on it. As it is, **Mon Oncle Antoine,** dealing with the same period in Quebec, took 8 awards, and **400 Blows** has been heralded as a classic film about a kid growing up. Allan King will just have to wait until we wake up from our fascination with foreign language films, and duly recognize **Who Has Seen The Wind** for the achievement that it is.

I am aware that more sophisticated movies-goers will find faults with the adaptation of W.O. Mitchell's work for the screen, but not having read the book and never having been to the Prairies, I am grateful for the wonderful glimpses into small town life, on par with Jutra's insightful masterpiece, **Antoine.** What surprises me most is that King, having been steeped in the documentary tradition, can turn around and direct a drama that can compare with the best of Hollywood, for a fraction of the cost. The superb cast must share the honors, especially the youngsters, and Richard Leiterman's cinematography surely deserves some sort of an award. Maybe I'm naive, but could **J.A. Martin photographe** be that much better than **Wind** to have cornered that many awards, or are politics at play at the CFA?

George Csaba Koller
Toronto, Ont.

Adores Adorée

I have, since 1968, been researching the life and career of the late silent motion picture actress Renée Adorée (1898-1933), who appeared on the stage in Australia, London, and New York prior to her film career in America (ca. 1916-1919).

I would appreciate correspondence with any of your readers who may have information/personal recollections regarding Renée that they would be willing to share with me. Perhaps one of them could tell me what became of her mother (Victorine Lamarr Adorée) and brother (name unknown) who lived in London (Brixton ?), England at the time of her death in California (October 5, 1933); or what became of Adorée's sister Mira who, as Mira La Fonte, appeared in theatrical productions in Mexico City during the 1930's.

Thank you for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Randye B. Cohen

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SPOT LIGHT
on curly posen

Curly S. Posen has been in the business – the entertainment business – for a long time. Being president of the Motion Picture Theatre Association of Ontario for the last five years is only the culmination of a career which started as an usher and ran through stoking the calliope and booking strippers, not to mention owning and running theatres.

He remembers how it was, and talks about the beginnings of exhibition in Canada. Outspoken as always, Posen has seen enough to know what he thinks.

Cinema-Canada: *How did you get into the film business?*

Curly S. Posen: I was going to school and one of the fellas sitting next to me, his father owned a movie theatre, so we used to go in on Friday and Saturday and usher. That's how I got into it. I was in the music business too. After I left school I went with a carnival and then with a circus, and played the calliope.

Cinema-Canada: *Which circus?*

Curly S. Posen: The Maple Leaf Circus. We had a lot of fun, you know, and it was all one big happy family. The travelling was tough, because we used to travel in broken-down trucks anywhere from 100 to 250 miles a day or every second day, because you couldn't play in towns close by. Nobody believed in it at the time, just like the film industry. You know, if you're next door, you can't play because you're going to lose business by it.

We had a big top and we used to have to set it up each time. Everybody worked at everything, don't forget, even cooking and washing and washing down the horses. We had clowns and everything. I used to be kind of an entertainer too, I used to dance.

Cinema-Canada: *You danced in the circus?*

Curly S. Posen: Well, I did, you know, hoofing. I used to be a soft shoe dancer and then I went into ballet – I used to take ballet lessons when I was a kid. You can't tell it now, by my size. I was 107 pounds then and I danced ballet. And then I used to travel around with burlesque. I used to play with the band in burlesque. I worked with Gypsy Rose Lee and Phil Silvers.

Cinema-Canada: *Do you remember Phil Silvers?*

Curly S. Posen: Oh yes, he knows me today. What's-his-name, Red Buttons, I remember when he started in the shows. We were doing a communist scene with Phil Silvers, I think it was, and Red was running down the aisle yelling, "Down with the Communists" and he used to fall on his pratt.

photo: John Wlodarczyk

Was there real stripping back then?

No, no. They were wearing net brassières, and G-strings, you know. When they first started, there were net pants actually. There was no stripping – they had pants. Then they got the G-string. Rose LaRose was the only one that always wanted to lose her G-string – she was the dirtiest one of the bunch. Today she has a big burlesque house, I understand, in Toledo – a big nightclub that features strippers.

What kind of life was that?

We enjoyed it. Every show was one big happy family. The person himself meant something. I remember I went to Muskegan one time with one of the shows, and one of the trumpet players who was with us, his mother wouldn't let him go – he was only 17 at the time. She didn't want him to go away because she was afraid he wouldn't go to church on Sunday mornings, you see. So I promised her that I would take him. I went to Catholic church every Sunday with him, and it didn't bother me. When they kneeled, I kneeled and when they crossed, I crossed and that was that. So they didn't know the difference, and I used to go with him every Sunday because I had promised his mother. She believed me so she let him go. I guess I had an honest face... I don't know about today...

What happened to your orchestra?

It's still going.

When did you get into that?

I've been doing that since I was a kid in the school band. I was playing in the band with the shows I was going with, and I played the calliope when I was in the circus.

You never left that?

I wouldn't give that up. That's relaxing. You know, when I go out I see how crazy people can be at an affair. I enjoy myself.

What kind of affairs does your orchestra play at?

Just private affairs. The dates have gone down quite a bit. I don't want to play rock all night because I'm more of a Guy Lombardo type, and because they raise the scales on them. I mean, they used to use big bands; today you're going out with 3 and 4 musicians. At one time I used to be a big shot – I used to say, sorry, if you're going to have the affair at this place, you're going to have so many

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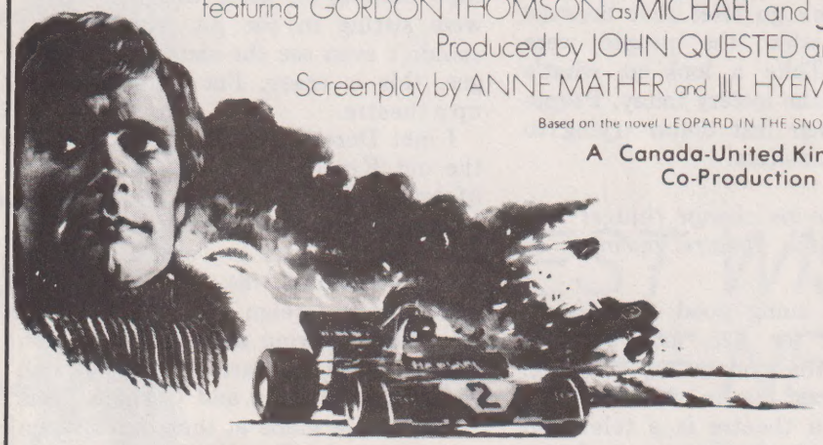

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musicians. But today, I don't argue because they can go and pick up a group with all of the amplifiers and everything, and with 2 pieces they can make enough goddam noise to blow the bar out.

When did you open the Casino theatre?

In '36. But before that, when I came back, I was working for the Allens in the comedy gift night. That was just after the Depression, you know, when we couldn't get any films, and we were giving out dishes, plus we had comedy gift nights and amateur shows and so on.

What were the Allens like?

Very good. Very good. The best people in the world to work for. And I'm not kidding you – Barry Allen wasn't even born when I worked for them. But you see, you're going back to an era where the industry was a family industry. They weren't related to each other, but everybody that worked in the industry meant something to somebody else. No matter who, from the janitor right up to the president. There were no big shots. There was nobody that, just because he was president or vice-president, wouldn't come and say 'hello' to you or anything like that. Or ask you questions, or anything.

And you feel that the atmosphere has changed.

Well, today it's dog-eat-dog. You know, nobody gives a damn for the next person. It's not like the old industry, you know. You're here today and they'll say, 'how are you', and everything. If you get sick, to hell with him – he's no good anyway. You see. This is it. It's dog-eat-dog. It's not like it used to be.

Everybody is outbidding everybody else. It's got so that one guy who wanted a picture, he even offered to give them a percentage on the candy bar. On the candy bar, the only thing that's kept the theatres going. It's a heyday for the film companies, not only American but Canadian, all of them. It's a heyday for them. They can get anything they want now for a picture. There's a shortage of pictures. The hold-overs that you see all these weeks sometimes, they don't even have pictures to play, so they have to hold them over. In the meantime, they're holding over and the other guys in the small towns can't get any new films because there are no new films.

Haven't the independents always had that problem?

I want to tell you something – years ago, a lot of independent theatres made a lot of money, became rich men. I'm going back now to the 30's during the Depression when Nat Taylor gave up his law practice. I don't think he was a good lawyer; maybe that's why he gave it up. He went around to all the little theatres and said, "let's join in one shot together and we'll do the buying and booking for you and be partners and pay expenses and everything, and you manage your theatre. We'll look after it all". These people all became millionaires, those little independent corner theatres that you don't see anymore. Taylor made more than 24 of them who had the guts to go in with him – millionaires.

So they did alright.

They did very well.

Until television.

Actually, television didn't... bingo killed us more.

Why don't you explain that. I thought television was the thing that...

Well, the people who went to theatres, most of the time, couldn't afford television at first. If you recall, they were too expensive. But then, bingo came in. And that's what killed us because they could afford it and they could make money on bingos – that's why dishes or anything in a theatre couldn't go after that because money was what the people were looking for. Take a look at what's happening at the lottery today. People will spend their last dollar trying to get the million dollars.

How did drive-ins change things? Did they change the theatre business at all?

They were doing good. You could buy pictures for $25 and take in $2,000, and the concession was big. Concession was big in drive-ins. To me, a drive-in theatre is a television screen with refreshments – a drive-in restaurant, actually, and you're letting them watch television on the screen. If you watched at a drive-in, the first feature that goes on, they don't sit in the cars and watch the feature, they *eat, eat* and *eat*. I don't know what the hell goes on – how much can they eat?

What were other things like? When did the Sunday showings start?

Exactly, I can't tell you. I remember I was fighting the Lord's Day Act. As a matter of fact, in one of my theatres, a drive-in, when we didn't have Sunday movies, we used to show the film free, but charge for parking and then they grabbed me for that. By the time they brought me up and were going to fine me, we had already fought the fact that we could open up on Sundays.

And this is what we were fighting. I've always been fighting the film companies and the chains, although I represent the chains too now, you know. I'm from the Association but I still have my fights with them... Mind you, it's getting better. You'll notice that independent theatres with Odeon are playing day and date in the city now. Some pictures they don't want us to play – this new picture opening up, **Close Encounters** that Columbia's got – it's supposed to be a big picture. They don't want nobody else playing it with them. But Odeon broke down and they're letting you play now. I play with Odeon in Brantford even. Famous will eventually break down.

When did you start showing foreign films?

When I came back from the States in '49. I took a look at the halls where they were having ethnic shows and, Christ, the places were jammed with an influx of ethnic groups from Europe coming in after the war. They were sitting in the pit with us and couldn't even see the shows. So I said, gee, this is crazy, I'm going to open up a theatre.

I met Dorothy Burritt and I opened the old King Theatre on College and Manning. It had been closed and I started to show the first, actually the first, foreign films in Toronto because the International was in and they were calling it a foreign film theatre, but they were showing nothing but British films. Well, I started with Jewish films, Italian films and German films – no, no Germans at that time. When we showed the Russian films, the people from Yugoslavia were against the Russians. We used to have fights outside, and then when we showed some other kind of films that some nationality didn't like, they were picketing outside. We had to have police there.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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But you kept taking the pictures?

We kept taking them. I remember the Yugoslavian picture we had, Christ, they were hitting each other, but we did big business. We were actually the first all-around foreign film house in Toronto.

Were the films subtitled?

Yes, they were all subtitled. And the funny part is that every picture that came into Canada, whether it was from the Communist countries or not, were all censored by the RCMP first, before they even went to a censor board. I remember I was going to New York to Art Kino pictures – Russian pictures down there – to make a deal for some pictures here and when I got to the border and I mentioned my name, they stopped me. Some guy by the name of Posen was a subversive and was on the blacklist. I missed two planes before they found out it wasn't me.

photo: John Wlodarczyk

Why weren't foreign pictures shown in other theatres, like Famous Players?

Well, they didn't have the brains to show them. That's what I always tell them. You see, they didn't show anything except English pictures. Odeon started here because Famous couldn't show British pictures here; they couldn't get any dates on them.

Do you think there should be a Canadian feature film industry?

Oh yes, nobody's against it. I think it's a good idea, but the CFDC is putting money into films and losing millions and millions of dollars on crappy films, whereas they could get somebody in from the States with a name to direct these films and make money. But they don't want to do this. Everybody wants their name in lights. Everybody is a ham. This is what I've got against the Canadian film thing: the people who are arguing that we can put on levies instead of going out and getting good stories that will be box-office. Fine, they want culture, go and make a cultural film and send it around to the schools and places like that. Don't put it in our theatres and force us to play it or pay a levy for it. Because we ain't going to get nobody in to *pay* for it. This is what I'm mad at – they start talking about culture in theatres but we're not a culture thing – we're a business. The small towns as well, for leisure time.

What do you think the future is for the theatres?

Good, if they want to listen, and want to work with people, and they got to start somewhere. Now, let's not kid ourselves. They're talking with this guy MacDonald (David, M.P.), how crazy can he get, talking about how not everybody can be a Robert Redford. But I guarantee if they brought Robert Redford up here and made a Canadian picture with the CFDC sponsoring it and backing it, they'd get their money back in no time, even if it was a dog.

Yes, but there are films that were made to look like they weren't produced in Canada – you know, so that they would be acceptable in the United States and I don't think that those films have done very well. I'm thinking of things like ***Breaking Point.*** *Then there are films like* ***Duddy Krawitz, Lies My Father Told Me,*** *or* ***Why Shoot the Teacher*** *which are obviously set in Canada.*

But they're box-office because they're good stories.

Right. What I'm saying is that you can make a film that is set in Canada, and it can still be popular.

Certainly, but they're good stories, not culture, but good stories.

But don't you feel that films like ***Why Shoot the Teacher*** *or* ***Lies*** *or* ***Duddy*** *have a cultural impact?*

Just like **Fiddler on the Roof** had a cultural impact – it made money. **My Fair Lady** made money. **Star Wars** is making money – cultural. Future culture. They're well done. You know, I saw this picture, **Goldenrod.** Did you see it?

Yes

It's a nice picture. The title killed it. They wanted them to change the title and they wouldn't change it. The picture is a playable picture, but who the hell knows they were talking about that goldenrod that grows out West. I mean, why, why? If they had given it a rodeo title, it would have made a lot of money because everybody is interested in rodeos. But this is what I'm trying to get at. They've got their minds set on what they want and that's it.

I don't mind my tax money going to the NFB, but I hate like hell when my money goes into Canadian films to make things that had to go down the toilet. And they have no business putting any kind of a levy in theatres because there are other industries that they've never helped.

Ford is making a million out of here. Why don't they get after those guys? The newspapers say they're closing up Canadian factories because they're sending in everything preassembled. They make the parts in the US. It's the same thing here. Make the film in the US and send them up here and show them so you can get your tax money back. Isn't it the same thing, actually? You're making films in the States and sending them up here to make money and you're paying your taxes on it.

I think we should have a Canadian car. I wouldn't mind taxing GM and Ford to do that.

Fine, but they don't do that. They don't talk about that. You know why – because they're big people. We're not big here.

Kirwan Cox
Edited by Michèle Caron and Kirwan Cox

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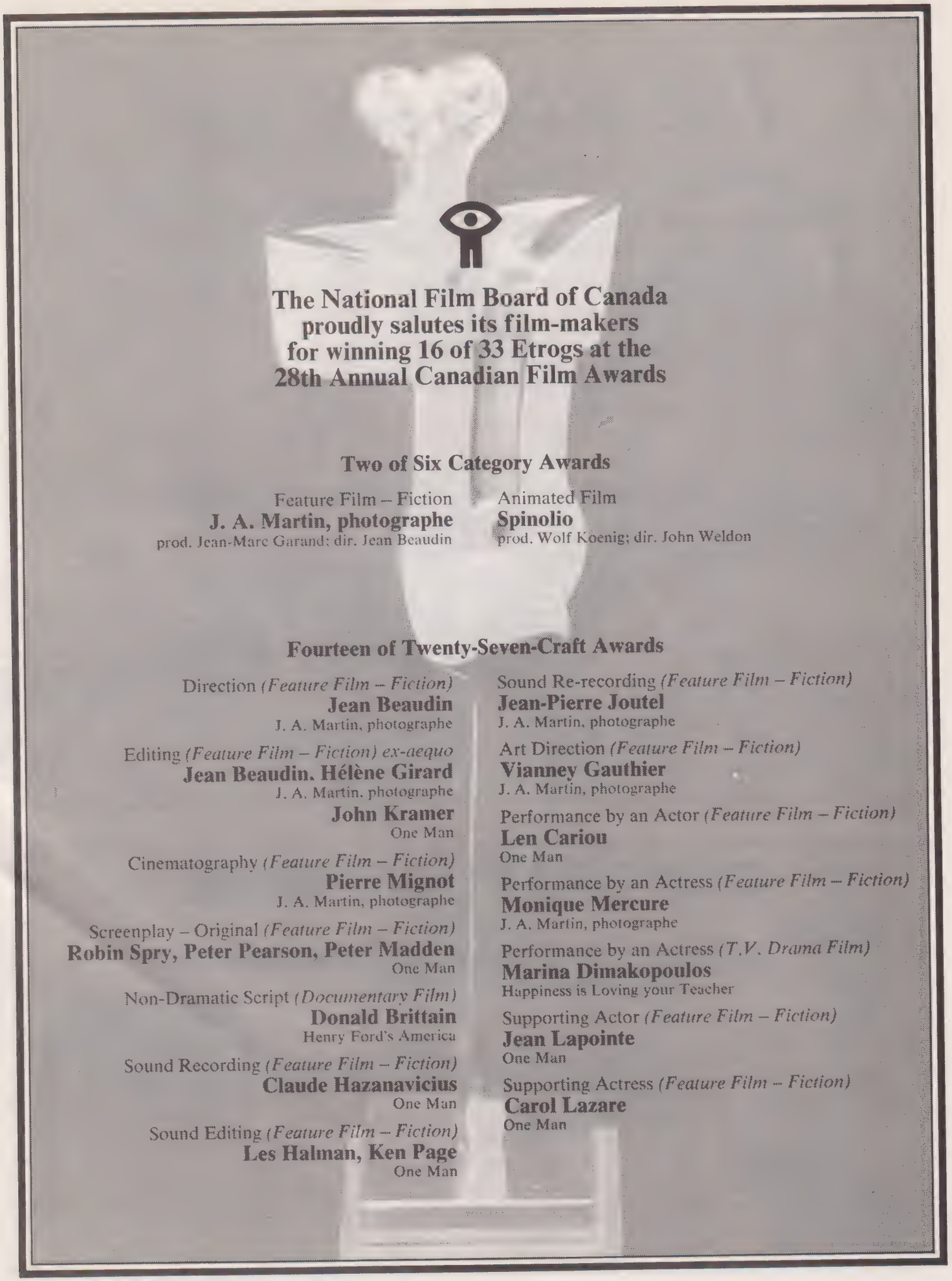

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soaring like a star

These days, with all the press coverage of the funding and production of features, it's hard to tell the stars from the men who package the films. Below, Gunter Ott gives us a profile of executive producer, Garth Drabinsky.

by Gunter Ott

Garth H. Drabinsky in his law office.

The Silent Partner, a 2.5 million dollar Canadian film starring Elliot Gould, Christopher Plummer and Susannah York recently wrapped up principal photography at the new Toronto Eaton Centre. The shoot marks the first time that the steel and glass commercial palace has been used as a location for a feature film. The production company rented 4,000 square feet of space and built their own bank complete with deposit slips and tellers wearing T-shirts that said things like "Penalty For Early Withdrawal" and "Bankers Do It With More Interest".

The bank also contained real money – $6000 worth which the producers nervously guarded between shots. The "First Bank of Toronto" set was so convincingly situated in the concourse among the maze of clothing, shoe and stereo shops that a number of people wandered in to open up accounts or deposit money.

Other locations around town used during the 8 week shoot included the SRO bar in the Hyatt Regency hotel, a house in Thornhill where winter was simulated in the heat of August and the old Sick Children's Hospital which housed the set for a body rub parlor and a police station.

Directed by Daryl Duke, veteran Canadian film and television director, **The Silent Partner** is about a meek bank teller who decides to put a little excitement into his mundane life by robbing his own bank. But excitement wasn't just confined to the storyline. One day, an appeal for extras was broadcast over radio stations CHUM and CFTR, two local rock stations. Almost within minutes, thousands of young people swarmed over the multi-million dollar Eaton Centre complex with visions of stardom dancing in their eyes. What they got was a Silent Partner T-shirt, one dollar, a Big Mac and a milkshake... and of course the chance to see themselves for a fleeting moment up on the giant screen when the film is released next summer.

Executive producer on **The Silent Partner** was Garth Drabinsky, a Toronto lawyer, specializing in the intricate entanglements of the entertainment field, who is carving out a career for himself in theatre and film through his own company, Tiberius Productions. Drabinsky, at 29, has published an authoritative book on Canadian film called *Motion Pictures And The Arts In Canada.* He is a lecturer in Entertainment Law at York University, as well as a recently appointed Fellow of the University.

His interest in film began during his school days when he published the short-lived Canadian cinema magazine *Impact.* Later he was involved in the publication of the *Canadian Film Digest* and produced "Flick Flack" a television show on the Global Network during the 1973/74 season.

Gunter Ott is a freelance writer and photographer from Toronto.

Drabinsky's interest in **The Silent Partner** began when two producers, Joel B. Michaels and Stephen Young came to him with a property written by Hollywood screenwriter Curtis Hanson. Hanson, formerly editor of *Cinema Magazine,* had optioned a suspense novel called *Think Of A Number* by Danish author Anders Bodelson, and developed it into a psychological thriller which he presented to Michaels and Young as **The Silent Partner.**

Drabinsky, convinced that the property was commercially viable, with a good script and excellent dialogue, headed for Cannes to arrange financing, largely through Carolco S.A. of Los Angeles.

As Drabinsky explains it, raising the money wasn't a problem: "If you put together the right package, any film is saleable." Drabinsky has both a good package and what an executive most needs... "a good profile, credibility and an understanding of the economics of the business".

The final package assembled by the three producers (Michaels and Young functioning as line producers) included Daryl Duke as director, Billy Williams (**Women in Love, The Magus**) as cinematographer, screenplay by Hanson, music by Oscar Peterson (his first film score) and of course Plummer, York and Gould as the icing on the cake. Choice supporting roles went to Canadian actors Michael Donaghue (*Side Street*), Michael Kirby (**Death Weekend**), funny-man John Candy (**Find The Lady**), blonde bombshell Gail Dahms, and **The Far Shore** leading lady Céline Lomez.

Duke was chosen, claims Drabinsky, because... "he is the finest resident English language director in Canada; he has enough experience from Hollywood to control a film of this magnitude with this calibre of stars." Duke's control was crucial to the 41 day shoot which included 600 set-ups covering 130 pages of script. The style of the film demanded a lot of intricate cutting which had to be exceptionally well planned.

Drabinsky, who describes himself as "an entertainment entrepreneur with a backing in law" is unfailing in his enthusiasm for film. A full third of the bookshelves in his otherwise spartan Bay Street law office is given over to film books; the Mickey Mouse cover of Leslie Halliwell's *The Filmgoer's Companion* sits cheek by jowl with hidebound legal texts. Drabinsky sees himself playing a major role in the development of the film industry in this country. Though claiming not to seek the limelight like some other producers, he feels that he possesses both the credibility and the financial clout to produce top-notch movies of international stature here in Canada.

To further these ends, he is setting up a distribution arm for his Tiberius Productions which will handle **The Silent Partner** and his future projects. Drabinsky is already developing a new property but stresses that he is "not just looking for things to do... it's a question of finding quality things to do. I want always to improve and to take pride in what I see on the screen."

The Silent Partner is the second film that Drabinsky has produced in the last year. He already has a hot property on his hands with **The Disappearance,** an Anglo-Canadian co-pro starring Donald Sutherland, Francine Racette and Christopher Plummer, that wrapped in January.

But, not content to rest on his laurels, Drabinsky has lost no time in promoting the newer film. Barely a week after principal photography had ended for **The Silent Partner,** he already claimed to have sold 12 territories and was momentarily expecting the clincher – the crucial American deal.

Though Drabinsky considers himself a producer in the classic model, like Sam Goldwyn, perhaps a more accurate comparison would be to Irving Thalberg, the young "Wunderkind" of Hollywood in the early thirties who was totally engrossed in both the craft and the business of every film under his control.

Drabinsky chats with the crew at the Eaton Centre

During the shooting of **The Silent Partner,** Drabinsky appeared on the set every day to, as he puts it... "add weight to business decisions, see that the schedule was adhered to and make sure that the script was followed without deviation. I am what you call a non-absentee producer."

His presence had its effect. Despite the complexity of locations and the difficulties of filming in the crowded concourse of the Toronto Eaton Centre, the film came in only a week over schedule and members of the cast and crew were still friendly towards one another. Indeed, few, if any, personality clashes seem to have erupted even with the occasionally "difficult" Gould.

"Elliot was remarkable... the man is a prince, committed totally to the film (which he thinks is his best since Bergman's **The Touch**). He is in almost every scene and was always thoroughly rehearsed when he appeared on the set," says Drabinsky. "Susannah and Christopher were more moody but still thoroughly professional."

The only real blemish to mar Drabinsky's enthusiasm over the film is his exasperation with special effects. "The level of competence in special effects in this country is disastrous. Up to now, if a difficulty was called for, you just wrote it out of the script. That's how they do things in Canada." But Drabinsky admits, the fault lies not so much with the people as with the lack of experience.

"Special effects people in Canada haven't been forced to do the level of effects that Hollywood demands. The same thing occurs with stuntmen." When asked how this situation could be rectified, Drabinsky suggested simply that IATSE (the union responsible for technicians) take all their stuntmen and special effects people down to Hollywood to get some real training.

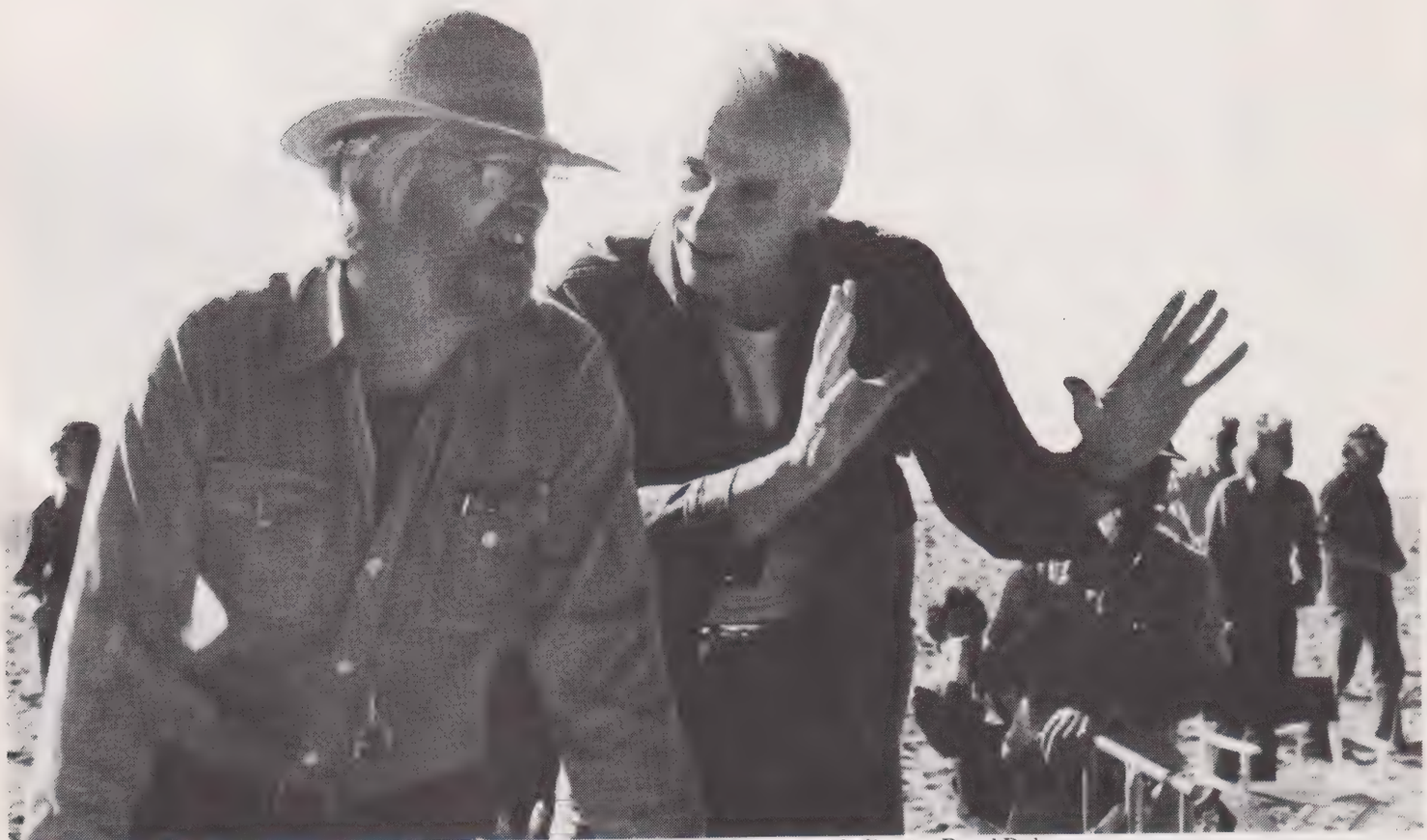
Since he believes that "it takes almost the same amount of aggravation and energy to produce a low budget film as it does to create a multi-million dollar movie," Drabinsky doesn't intend to consider any project that requires less than a three million dollar budget. He expects his next, as yet undisclosed, project to be budgeted at around 4-5 million. That, plus the setting up of his distribution company, arranging at least one major live production and one feature film every year, and maintaining his law practice, keeps Garth Drabinsky soaring like a shooting star.

Giving birth to a film is never simple. But with both **The Disappearance** and **The Silent Partner** looking as though they may be international successes, Drabinsky certainly makes it all appear so easy. Wunderkind – right?

billy williams b.s.c.

a softlight man

Mark Irwin continues his interviews with cameramen as he talks to Billy Williams, the Director of Photography on the shoot of *The Silent Partner*.



Billy Williams, Director of Photography, discusses a scene in **The Silent Partner** with director Daryl Duke.

Originally there was only softlight: hard, baked California ultraviolet diffused through cheesecloth onto outdoor sets with glass roofs and breakaway walls. Then came progress: artificial light, color stock and a slow swerve away from what was "natural" to what was "illuminated."

The return to natural or "source" lighting made its way during the late sixties and seventies, until today it is much accepted and much imitated.

This interview is with a cameraman who, years ago, was faced with the old artificial style of lighting and chose to start (albeit unknowingly and not altogether alone) a trend that ended with the style of soft light that we have today. During that time he photographed ***Billion Dollar Brain, Women in Love, Sunday Bloody Sunday, The Wind and the Lion, Voyage of the Damned*** *to name only a few. He was in Toronto to shoot* ***Silent Partners*** *this summer, and I spoke with him just before the last day of shooting.*

Cinema Canada: *Tell me about* ***Silent Partner:*** *Is it set in Toronto or is it anywhere, USA?*
Billy Williams: Oh no... the screenplay is from a book which is Danish, but was written for Toronto and for the Eaton Centre. It's Canadian financed, Canadian crew and director, largely a Canadian cast. What I've tried to do is get the feeling of being in a city, of being in Toronto in particular. And not having been here before, I was very excited about the look of the city; I mean, it's probably been done before but I can't say I recall a film about Toronto.

Cinema Canada: *Was there ever an image of this country given to you through Canadian films?*
Billy Williams: Well, you have the National Film Board of Canada. I come from a documentary tradition, in that I worked for Edgar Anste for about five years and he was a close friend of Grierson; John Grierson, Edgar Anste and Humphrey Jennings being the forefathers of British documentary film. I worked for a company called British Transport Films, which still exists, and I was an assistant... along with David Watkin and Robin Painter, now both cameramen.

Cinema Canada: *So that's how you started in the film business?*
Billy Williams: My father was a cinematographer who entered the industry in 1910. He was in the British Navy in World War I, filmed the surrender of the German Fleet at Scapa Floe... a marvelous feat which I've seen on television recently. He did everything from newsreels to features, and I started as his assistant.

Anyway, I left British Transport Films because I wanted to be a cameraman in my own right and there didn't seem to be any opportunity there. I shot my first film when I was about 25, which was very young then (1954). It was a little appeals film for a charity organization. The next film I did was for an oil company. It was called **Rivers of Time** and it was sponsored by Iraq Petroleum... about the historical tradition of the Middle East and its influence on civilization going back about 3000 years B.C. Eighteen years later I went back to Iraq to film the first ten minutes of **The Exorcist,** and on the crew we had some of the same Iraqis who'd worked with me eighteen years before.

Did you stay in documentaries?
When I first came into the industry, commercials, documentaries and features were very much divided. You had to start in features and work your way up. But when commercial television came in, and commercials, it provided a link between the three, because a lot of the directors were out of live television and they were looking for different cameramen. So I began as a documentary cameraman, become a commercials cameraman and then a feature cameraman.

What was your first feature?
Actually, **Billion Dollar Brain** in 1966 was my first major film. I'd worked with Ken Russell previously but only on commercials.

Russell has a very powerful visual style, sometimes too powerful. Did he have that before you met him or did you help develop it?
I wouldn't say I helped develop it; I mean, he's always had a very strong visual style. I found him a very challenging and exciting person to work with. He's not a man whom you have to agree with all the time. There were times when I disagreed with him and would argue my case, and he would argue his, and somewhere along the line we would reach a compromise. I think he really likes that in a way. But you have got to be prepared to do battle with him. There was this particular scene in **Women in Love** where we had a very big argument. It was long scene under a huge tree and all the principles in the cast – Glenda Jackson, Alan Bates, Oliver Reed...

The table scene...?
The table scene right near the beginning...

With the fig...?
With the fig... Well, that was shot at Kettlestone Hall which is the ancestral home of the Curzon family... a long table was set up under this huge beech tree. Looking one way, you looked out onto a very brightly lit lawn. Looking the other way, you looked back into more trees. So that when you had people on each side of the table – when you looked out into the bright sunlight – those people without light were in silhouette. When you looked back the other way it was a totally different balance. The blocking of the scene was that Alan Bates had his back to the bright light. He had most of the lines – it was his scene, but there were cuts to establish all the other persons. Well, Ken didn't want me to light it. I said I could light it so that it wouldn't look lit, because I had brutes (this was before HMI lights) – I had about two or three brutes and I put them through very big silks so that the light was very soft. Whenever I shot towards Alan Bates, who would have otherwise been in silhouette, I used this soft fill light. It still kept him underexposed compared to the background, but I think that the scene worked with that light.

Russel just didn't want it to look lit?
He didn't want it to look lit. I think somewhere back along the line, when he was at the BBC, he perhaps worked with cameramen who overlit scenes. I think it's very easy on location – on exteriors – if you've got lights, to over-use them. I think everybody's been guilty of that sometime. He has an aversion to the use of lights on day scenes. He accepts them on night scenes, of course, but if you want to use lights on a day scene you've got a battle. So I had a battle and I won it. In fact, **Women in Love** is the one film which had every situation, every type of lighting and opportunity for one to push for: low key day, very bright day interiors, soft summer light in England around the Lakeshore, under the trees, candlelight, twilight, dusk, firelight...

How did you light that... was that a set?
No, that was a location in Derbyshire. It was an old house near this lake. We shot the drowning scene there which we had to do at the last light. We did it for three evenings just to get the last five minutes of the light. But the wrestling scene was done in a large room with a huge fireplace. It had a real fire, and when I discussed with Ken Russell how we were going to shoot it, I said if you can get setups where the fireplace is on the side of frame, rather than middle of frame, I can get a better light. I had lamps very low, just out of picture with what we call a full CTO, to simulate the same color as the fire. Then I found the best way to get firelight was to use branches, leaves... shimmering... you have to sort of perfect the technique.

The thing that always impressed me about the style of light that you use is the broad area softlight; you have silks or lots of time to bounce light. I guess that's really become traditional commercial style.
Well, when I first started on features I was sort of half and half between hard light and soft light. I was really developing soft light style when I first started on features. But in recent years we've had polystyrene, which I think is

---

Mark Irwin, an associate member of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, graduated from York University and has shot a number of films. Recently, he has worked on the ***World of Wizards, Blood and Guts, Starship Invasions*** *and* ***Mutation.***

a marvelous asset for reflected light. It's so easy to fix, light as opposed to damaging, clipping things onto walls or ceilings. And of course we've got small quartz units which are very small and compact, which make bounce-lighting a lot easier and quicker. The control of it is something that one just has to work on in terms of flagging and controlling the direction of the light by the angle of the polystyrene – or alternatively, by going through tracing paper.

With minibrutes or something wide...?

Yes, minibrutes or 5's or 2's or whatever... I mainly use polystyrene, and when I came over here I found they were using a different type of board which I didn't adapt to so well...

Foamcore.

Yes, I got them to use one-inch polystyrene which is what I prefer. And I used that almost entirely on interiors, perhaps occasionally using a hard light to pick up some furniture or something that is very dark. I very seldom use hard light on faces or interiors. But on night exteriors it's a totally different thing, and softlight doesn't work on night exteriors except as a filler. You have big areas to cover and I prefer a sharp look to night exteriors.

I suppose that during the thirties and forties and fifties right up to the sixties – even today – there are cinematographers who only use hard light. You can get exactly what you want by flagging and controlling the light with gauzes and so on; but unless you do it very well, it can look artificial. I use hard light sometimes but I try to disguise it, and certainly shadows – hard shadows – bother me enormously. One can accept one hard shadow, but more than one and I get really bothered about it. I always find a diffused shadow much more acceptable.

Speaking about softlight, I know that in Britain you still don't very often use what in Canada we call softlights, actual units. Or do you?

Not very much. I think most people are bouncing off polystyrene, particularly the younger cameramen. But you see somebody like Unsworth; his work is absolutely superb, but it has changed a lot over the years. If you look back on Geoff's earlier films you'll find that he was using hard light. He's changed his style now and his work looks much better.

Let's just consider your position as a cameraman with different directors. Do you sort of gauge their temperament at the start and anticipate how things are to happen on the set, or does it just happen?

Well the director-cameraman relationship is a marriage; you have to work very closely together. I think you use each other as sounding boards, in terms of the visual interpretation. Obviously the director's first consideration is his screenplay and storyline and his relationship with the actors, but when it actually comes to putting it on film and what to do with the camera, then his relationship with the cameraman has to be a certain creative balance: a certain amount of give and take and a freedom to express ideas. I've found that John Schlesinger, probably more than anyone, is extremely receptive and understanding and yet has his own idea of how he wants to do things. But if you have a better idea, he'll go with it. He's not too proud to say, well, your idea is better and I'll go with that. You can talk to Schlesinger; I enjoyed working with him enormously and would like to work with him again. He puts so much into a scene. Every film he does he prepares in terms of script and sets and the style; he's really exciting to work with.

Billy Williams behind the camera assisted by Tony Palmieri; the Salvation Army watches with interest.

What is he working on now?

He's preparing a subject to do in England. He hasn't shot in England for a long time, not since **Sunday Bloody Sunday,** which was a very satisfying film to do. Interestingly enough, they had a special preview of **Women in Love** before it was released. He came along with his producer and they talked to me and said they liked it very much and asked if I was interested in shooting **Bloody Sunday,** as it was called then. I said I'd like to very much. When we got really closer to it, I had a chance to talk to Schlesinger about the look of the film. He liked what I had done in **Women in Love,** but he said that it was a very romantic, strongly visual film. **Sunday Bloody Sunday** he said, is an intimate story about three people, with lots of detail; it's a very personal sort of film and I want it to be well photographed, but I don't want the photography to dominate in any way. So I accepted that limitation. I thought it was correct. If anything, I would say that I underphotographed it in order not to come into conflict with what the story was about. I think that one has to do that sometimes – I hate the use of photography or effects or of a lens that becomes obtrusive.

Do you find that directors expect a certain look from you? Do they hire you to do what you did on another film?

I try not to get myself typecast too much. I think each film demands its own look. I wouldn't like to feel that my photography is always looking the same. Each scene and each set demands certain things emotionally in order to feel right, so that I come into a set and read a scene and decide on the style for it. Then the next thing can be quite different. I don't feel that you have to have a continuity of lighting style throughout the movie because life isn't like that. You can go from this room where we're lit by soft window light and go to a nightclub. You can go out there and sit at a café. Each one of those things needs to look different. They don't need to look the same. And I think you've got to give the film variety if that's what it should have. I think that by giving it variety, you're giving the audience a change of view. The cinematographer can direct that viewpoint by the use of the lens and composition and shapes – the lights, the darks, perspective, movement – we have a lot of control in that sense. There are very few directors who are fully aware of what the cinematographer can achieve. Very few. Kubrick is one of them. And he has absolute control of style.

Is Russell one of those few directors?

He is similar to Kubrick. I wouldn't say that he's as expert as Kubrick; Kubrick is technically without equal. On the other hand, Russell has a great emotive quality which I think is very good. The only trouble is, I think, it gets out of control; it has to be subdued. In working with Russell, I felt that I was toning him down, or toning down his ideas from time to time. Whenever I work with a director I express what I feel and he can either accept it or reject it; you don't sit back and just accept everything as gospel. I haven't worked with Ken since **Women in Love** and the reason for that is that he wanted me to shoot **The Devils** and I didn't want to do it. And although we are still good friends, he hasn't asked me to work with him.

I like to be totally involved in the use of the camera setup, the camera movement, the choice of lens and the way it's lit. I think those areas are terribly important to me. Now the degree to which the director wants to participate in those is up to him. Some directors are very strong on the use of a lens but are not so involved in the lighting. The cinematographer is always the junior partner of this marriage I talked about earlier. I mean I *have* to give way, but if I feel very strongly about something, I disagree with a director. I will argue as forcefully as I can so that he is aware of what I feel, and then it's still up to him to say, "I'm the director and this is the way I want to do it."

Has that happened on this film?

Well, funnily enough, it happened over the choice of a location. I came into this film with only a week's preparation and there was not enough time for most of the key people to prepare fully. This is not common, but this was the case. There was a choice of two places for the exterior of Elliot Gould's apartment. The exterior was a key set; it was terribly important the way it looked and where it was. I was shown two and they had virtually decided on one of them. When I saw the two of them, I was absolutely convinced they'd picked the wrong one... in visual terms, in terms of staging and so on. I was absolutely amazed that the director and the art director had made this choice. So I argued my point. It was somewhat difficult because I had only met the director two or three days before. But we went back to what was the second choice and took the art director there and we went back to the first... and eventually they changed their minds. We shot in the place that I liked, and we just finished there last night. It was great. Everything worked. You couldn't have built a better set on the studio lot. From the script, I had envisioned a picture in my mind of what that building should look like. It's an old apartment block, and it had to have a normal entrance, and it had to have a fire escape exit for reasons in the plot. The place we chose was an old building built at about the turn of the century with a lot of character and new buildings springing up all around it. This, to me, is Toronto. You've got little areas of the old city, Victorian buildings, and the skyscrapers shooting up around. Fortunately, you've retained a lot of the old city.

The Eaton Centre disguised as the First Bank of Toronto.

I know a lot of shooting occurred in and around the Eaton Centre. What problems did that present to you?

Well, it turned out to be fairly difficult because we had to build the bank (which is our main set), and a lot of the screen time takes place in this bank which is situated in the Eaton Centre. Also, there was a lot of linkage between the escalators in the other area of the Eaton Centre and the bank foyer and so on. The space that was available for us in which to build a set had limited head room because of the air conditioning system. So the art director had to build a set which would fit into the existing shape. The result was that because we were very short of preparation time, I was very busy shooting while he was designing the set. So I

finished up with a set which had inadequate light sources for a bank (which is a place that usually has fairly bright light.) I wanted a lot of overhead light and very soft key, and I was disappointed when I found that I was very lacking in headroom. It led to a lot of work in terms of clipping up polystyrene and bouncing light, instead of having it there available in an overhead fitting, which is what I would have preferred. I had an overhead fitting there, but it was a very strange one which let very little light through. And the other thing, of course, was that there was an enormous amount of glass. One of the disadvantages of bounce lighting is that it's more difficult to hide the reflections. Instead of using a smaller unit you're bouncing off a larger area of say, a four foot piece of polystyrene, and it's much more difficult to lose the reflection. So the bank turned out to be very difficult but the results are fine. It was very hot because we blocked off all the air conditioning in the ceiling for the sound.

Had you worked with Daryl Duke before?

No, I had never met him before and we got on very well indeed. He's a very fine director with a great sense of humor. I'd certainly be happy to work with him again.

Were you ever shooting high speed lenses and available light or...?

I was shooting high speed lenses using a little light – not a lot. I put myself between six and ten-foot candles on some of the night scenes and it looked very good. It's very tricky with the focus. But we don't have Chemtone here and we don't have it in England; I would very much like to experiment with it.

How about flashing – actual mechanical flashing as opposed to chemical flashing – have you used that at all?

No, it's only been used once or twice in England. I know that Vilmos used to do it. I had quite a long chat with Vilmos recently and found him to be a very intelligent and interesting person. And Lazlo too. Vilmos has used that quite a bit over a period of years.

I know that when he shot ***McCabe and Mrs Miller*** *they flashed it at Alpha Cine in Vancouver, and he really created that sort of look on that film.*

Yes, I think he has a lot of style, but for myself, I don't like that form of treatment. I don't like to present an audience with an image in which it's very difficult to see anything. That's **McCabe and Mrs Miller,** that combination of softlight and underexposure, flashing and gauzing or whatever. I think that you finish up with such a flat negative that it has no point of emphasis, and as I was saying earlier about composition and use of light and dark, you must direct the audience's attention; there's got to be something in that frame which is going to hold their attention. Even if it's only for a couple of seconds and then you move on to something else and your attention goes to that. I find that this overuse of fog filters or flashing or gauzing is knocking everything down and evening it all out. I think you're losing dramatic emphasis...

A well-chaperoned stroll in the Beaches as Williams chats with Céline Lomez.

I know Zsigmond was more or less relieved from ***Funny Lady*** *for some of those reasons and it seemed quite unfair. He and Herb Ross wanted it to look like* ***Cabaret*** *and someone higher up wanted it to look like* ***Hello Dolly...*** *he wasn't Harry Stradling so... Has that ever happened to you?*

No. I've always enjoyed photographing beautiful ladies and that's one of the bonuses of our job, always to work with beautiful women: Faye Dunaway, Glenda Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor, Ava Gardner, Liv Ullman, Susannah York. You have to find a way to photograph them so that they look their best and I don't think that that need come in the way of the overall look of the film. When you're photographing a closeup of Elizabeth Taylor, then you've obviously got to do your best for her in terms of everything you have at your disposal. When you're photographing a long shot of the set, it's a different shot. It's when you come in close and think of all the details in the skin and the wrinkles and the lines; you don't want to see those unless she's playing a character in the movie.

Aside from Vilmos Zsigmond, how do you feel about any of the other American cameramen?

Well, I think they have several good cameramen there. I think that maybe some of the British cameramen are a little ahead of them. I like Conrad Hall's work very much; I thought his work on **Marathon Man** was excellent. I thought Owen Roizman on **Network** was very good and Victor Kemper on **The Last Tycoon...**

Are you familiar with Gordon Willis?

Oh I think Willis is very good, although when I first saw the **Godfather,** I found it a little oppressive – he always uses toplight and he doesn't tend to vary too much.

How about the Europeans?

I spent some time with Sven Nykvist in Munich; I was just finishing **The Devil's Advocate** and he was just starting **The Serpents Egg.** He's very good.

By the way, who directed ***The Devil's Advocate?***

Guy Green.

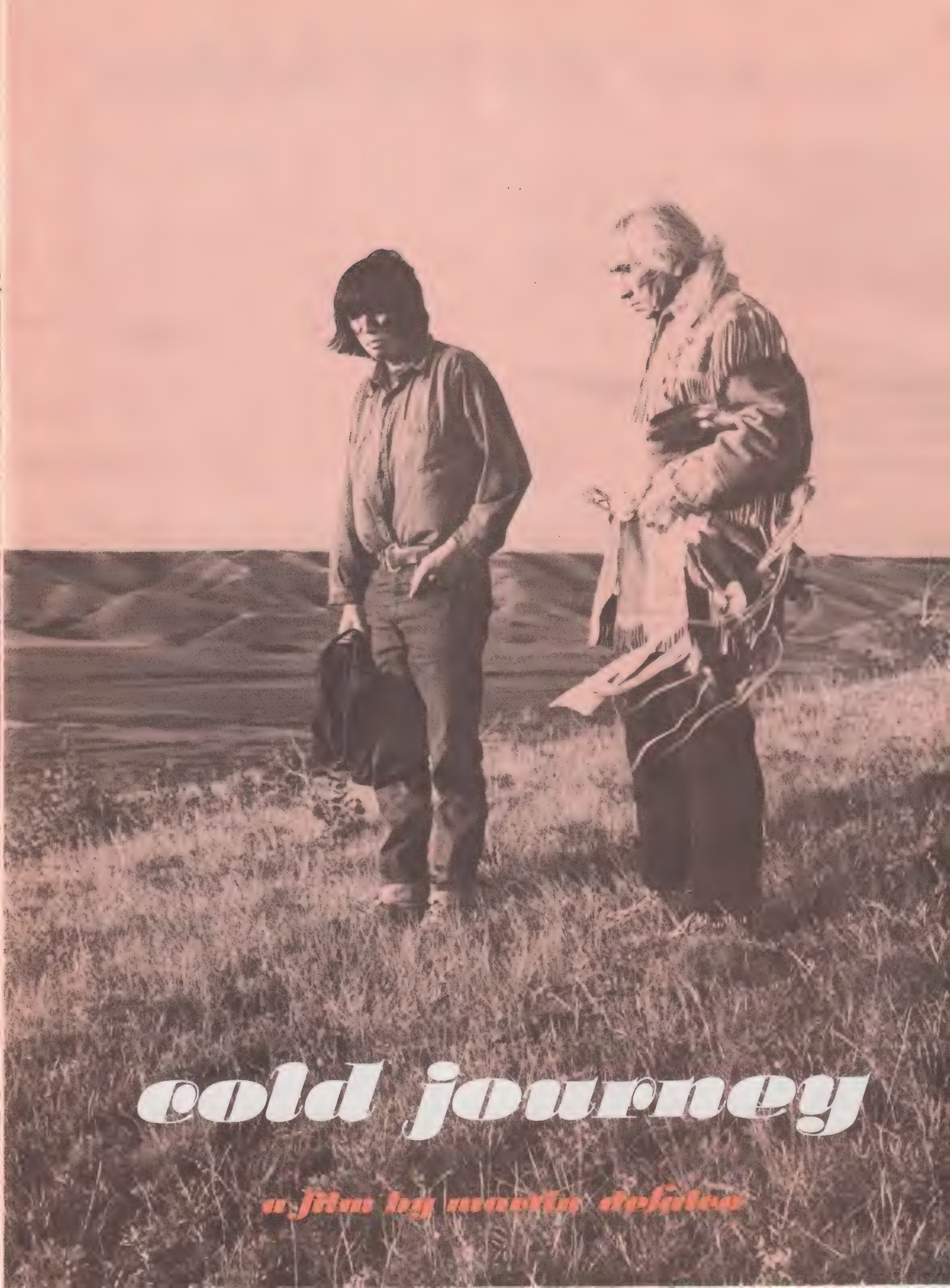
What was it like working for an ex-cameraman?

He's a bit conservatve in his choice of lenses and he's inclined to look at the shot through a 35mm or 50mm; I much prefer a 25mm or 29mm look and a 75mm or 100mm look or longer. But he's from a slightly older school (became a cameraman in 1944, won an Oscar for **Great Expectations** in 1947, started directing in 1953).

There are two or three Italians who are very good... Pasqualino de Santis, Guiseppe Rottuno, Storaro who just finished **Apocalypse Now.** I think the Italians are better than the French.

There's a fellow named Guareneri...

Guareneri, yes... he's very good you know; he's a soft light man. □


cold journey
a film by maurice dekiere

no life for an indian

On the reservation they called him "apple" — red on the outside, white on the inside. For Buckley, 15, all it meant was that he didn't really belong anywhere. **Cold Journey** is the story of this young Indian's fight to claim his heritage.

For 10 months of the year, and for the last 10 years, Buckley has been at Residential school, 200 miles from the Reservation where he was born. The school for him is a prison of "don'ts", a hazy force molding him to take his place in the world — the white man's world.

Part of Buckley's search for a place in this world takes him to the big city, through the disco bars and jails, and inevitably back to school. Summers are on the reservation. This is the world of beautiful rivers, forests and sunrises, played against the haunting lyrics of Willie Dunn's music.

The scenes were shot on location in The Pas, in Northern Manitoba — the biggest Indian reserve in Canada, at Pelican Narrows in Northern Saskatchewan and at the Piopot Reserve north of Regina where the NFB crew filmed a Pow Wow.

But Buckley is a stranger to his native world. He doesn't speak Cree, he's not good at fishing or hunting. The lakes are polluted with mercury. Buckley's own father tells him "soon there will be no life at all here for an Indian. It's no good learning to be an Indian — learn to be a white man".

Back at school, Buckley is befriended by Johnny, an Ojibway a little older and wiser, working as a caretaker at the school. Johnny usually traps and hunts and fishes. He's more in tune with today's life. He's a link between the old and new ways but can't really help Buckley make the transition. He tells Buckley about his uncle, who becomes a kind of oracle. Buckley must meet Uncle John to find out how to be an Indian. So Johnny takes him to a Pow Wow.

Uncle John, played by Chief Dan George, doesn't have the answer for Buckley, except to say "Buckley, there is no true Indian way for you. In desperation, Buckley "borrows" a skidoo and follows Johnny to go trapping in the north. In a prophetic scene of the upcoming ending, Buckley shoots and wounds a wolf, yet doesn't want to go in for the final kill. Johnny goes out after the wolf — "You gotta kill a wounded animal or he'll hurt someone". Finally Buckley is brought in for stealing the skidoo.

The verdict: "reform school" — just when Buckley says "I'm not running away any more — I'm not going to borrow anything any more — No I made up my mind. I don't need to go to reform school".

Buckley is trapped.

"A trapped animal has two choices — chew off his leg or... curl up and die".

"cold journey"

the crew

Directed by
Martin Defalco

Produced by
George Pearson

Original Screenplay
David B. Jones

Story Outline
Martin Defalco

Narration
George Pearson

Edited by
Tom Daly, Torbin Schoeler

Assistant
Lawrence Seligman

Consultant
Stanley Jackson

Director of Photography
Tony Ianzelo

Assistant
Andreas Poulsson

Original Music Composed and conducted by
Eldon Rathburn

Songs: Composed & Sung by
Willie Dunn

Accompaniment
Bob Robb

Sound Editing
Bernie Bordeleau

Assistant
André Galbrand

Re-recording
Michel Descombes
Jean-Pierre Joutel

Assistant Directors
Francis Mankiewicz
Ashley Murray

Location Managers
Jean Savard
Eva Pearce

Art Director
Denis Boucher

Liaison
Mike Mitchell

Location Sound
Hans Oomes

Boom Men
Jean-Guy Normandin
Bev Davidson

Electrician
Guy Remillard

Grip
W.G. Bradley, Jr.

Continuity
Monique Gervais

Production Assistant
Morley Loon

Post Production Supervision
Tom Daly

Executive Producer
Colin Low

Produced by
The National Film Board of Canada

Screening Time
75 minutes 29 seconds

Distributed by
The National Film Board of Canada
35mm and 16mm
Color

With considerable assistance for distribution costs from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Office of the Secretary of State.

Tony Ianzelo and Martin Defalco

the cast

Johnny Yesno
Buckley Petawabano
Chief Dan George

Supporting Cast

On the Reserve
Alphonse Dorion
Noel Starblanket
W.G. Bradley
Mary Linklater
Gilbert Linklater

At the Schools
The Teachers:
Reg Gibson
Joseph P. Kennedy
Sharon Ann Ewens
Doreen Hayes-Bingham
Daphne Karol

The Students:
Morley Loon
Gordon Bear
Lilian Michelle
The Children of Guy Hill Residential School
The Children of Margaret Barbour Collegiate, The Pas, Man.

In the Town
Guy L'Ecuyer
Jennifer Phipps
Sue Helen Petrie
Cliff Gardner
Les Nirenberg
Paul Fredette
Moses Bignell

In the City
Denis Lacroix
Billie Foley
Willie Dunn
Kirk McColl
Joe Plante

At the Pow-wow
The People of Piapot Indian Reserve, Sask.

This booklet on the movie **Cold Journey** *has been conceived and published by Premiere/En première: editors Jean-Pierre and Connie Tadros. Joan Irving was responsible for the research and interviews and wrote the articles. Louis Charpentier was the artistic director.*

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a human problem

an interview with martin defalco
by joan irving

You directed ***Cold Journey.*** *Did you also conceive the film?*

It was actually Noel Starblanket who directed us to the issue of native education. At the time, around 1969, he was working here as part of the NFB's Indian training film crew. That crew, many of whom have since gone on to be important leaders in their community, made a little film about residential schools. They had all experienced what it was like to be taken away from home as youngsters and sent to the government run residential schools, and they wanted to examine that situation in a longer film. They asked me to work with them on it and I agreed.

Had you worked with the Indian film unit prior to that?

No, but I was familiar with the kinds of problems they were talking about. At that time I was finishing a sponsored documentary film, titled **Northern Fisherman,** that I shot in Northern Saskatchewan on the Indian reserve at Pelican Narrows. I was shooting there around the first of September — the village was full of life. One day I walked down to the dock and they were pushing the kids into float planes. From then on there were no kids in the village and I suddenly realized that they had been taken out, to school. That had really bothered me, so when the idea for **Cold Journey** came up, I was interested. George Pearson (who produced **Northern Fisherman),** and I went to work on a proposal. From there we hired a scriptwriter and the project mushroomed.

You went back to Pelican Narrows to shoot much of the film. How were you, your crew and cast received there?

Very well. Of course I knew of the people from the previous film. Also, Buckley Petawabano, the young Indian who plays the central character in the film, speaks Cree. He and Johnny Yesno, the other lead actor, cleared the way for us many times. We didn't try to tightly organize and set-up the shoot; we went there and asked permission to do things as the filming proceeded. Working in that way, with the people, the film became much more of a community thing. Whenever people told us that what we were shooting wasn't right, such as the handling of the animals or the ceremonies and that, we changed it.

So from the beginning you were concerned about the authenticity of the film?

I tried to stay within the truth of the real situation. It was a film with a fictionalized story line, but I wanted to stay within a documentary context. When I go into the trapper's house in the film, it's really his house with his wife and his children. The people shown in the film are in their own situations. We had to be accurate because it was *their* lives we were depicting.

Did you decide to use documentary techniques in ***Cold Journey*** *because of your background as a documentary director at the NFB?*

That was part of it I suppose, but in **Cold Journey,** the documentary technique allowed me to get into the environment, to really feel it, to be almost impressionistic about it. And I think it worked. To me, the strength of the film is its documentary setting. The religious ceremony, the pow-pow, is real. The scenes showing Indians fishing and trapping are real. It's not a Hollywood thing. Also, there was the problem of actors. You can't make people who are not actors, act. So I eliminated that; except for Johnny Yesno, Buckley Petawabano, Chief Dan George and a few white actors, all the characters play themselves. Frankly, I don't think I could have made the film without using documentary techniques; I couldn't have cast it. There were two professional Indian actors in Canada — Buckley and Johnny. Luckily, we were able to get them to play the two lead roles. There was some suggestion at the time we were casting though, that other actors should take the parts.

You mean there was talk at the NFB about hiring non-Indian actors to play in the film.

Yes there was, and I think it was an honest concern. We were making a feature film. At the time, around 1970, there had never been a film made with Indians as the main characters, Chief Dan George had played in **Little Big Man,** but I believe he was cast as an afterthought, when they couldn't get Richard Boone or somebody. I'd worked with Indians and was absolutely convinced that not only could they do it, they would really make the picture. But it was a new thing, and as it turned out, we had problems. The fact that it is an inherently Indian film presented problems. The rhythms in the film

are Indian rhythms, the speech is slow, it doesn't peak. Before the film was finished and released, people around here were criticizing that. Once it was released, funnily enough, the audience accepted the slower rhythms.

That's fascinating. And it helps to understand the film because the film does seem slow. With Indian audiences then, it's not a problem.

No, not with Indian audiences. In fact, most people who are aware of those rhythms don't see it as a problem. With Indian audiences the film has a very strong impact. It's the first time they see an Indian in a lead role, not stereotyped, not apologizing. There's tremendous identification with the film. What surprised me was that when we screened the film in Seattle, it seemed that the impact of the film was greater in the States than it was in Canada.

In what way?

There's very much a feeling of religion about the film. It shows a very close relationship between the people and the land. The beautiful song Willie Dunn composed and sings in the film, "The seasons in their cycle sing their cycle song of love", describes that relationship. The first time I showed the film in the States there was a tremendous silence after the screening. I couldn't figure it out, I really couldn't. Then a woman came back to talk to me; she had tears in her eyes. It took me a while to understand this, but they are now an urban people. Their grandfathers had a religion that was based on a relationship to the land, but for them it had died out. They didn't know how to describe it to their children. The film shows Indians in Canada still living in the old way. Also, the American Indians identified very strongly with the whole problem of residential schools. Seeing **Cold Journey** they could say to their kids, now see, *that's* what it was like.

The story in the film, the young Indian's search for his culture and his own identity, is a fictionalized account, but from what you say the Indian audiences accept it at a very personal level.

The story has a certain universality to it. Almost 90 percent of the native people in Canada who went to residential schools experienced the painful cultural adjusment that Buckley faces in the film. We wanted this film to be useful and we worked very closely with the native community to make it so. Some white people get defensive when they see the film; they say the prejudice we show can't possibly be true. I want it to be clear though that the attitudes and the facts presented in the film are accurate.

How closely did you, Martin Defalco, identify with the conflict in the film?

It's a human problem in the end, and I completely identified with it. That isolation of the child from his mother — it tears those people apart, particularly the women. A native family is generally very, very close. You take the children away for 10 months to send them to school and that closeness disappears. When the kids come back, they're strangers. Normally, of course, the kids are accepted back into their families. In the film Buckley doesn't fit in, isn't accepted. For many Indians it's the first time they've seen this thing played out. I think when they see it in the film they can talk about it and it makes it easier for them.

martin defalco

Martin Defalco, director of **Cold Journey,** joined the National Film Board as an assistant sound recordist in 1952. He has since then worked as a picture editor, writer, director and producer with the NFB.

Defalco has made five documentaries and two feature films. It was **Northern Fishermen** and **Trawler Fisherman**, two films for the Federal Department of Fisheries, that planted the idea of making a film like **Cold Journey.**

To research the fishing films, Defalco travelled for months across the Northern Prairies. He got a first hand look at the devastating impact of white man's culture on the Indian.

His involvement with the native people continued in the making of **The Other Side of the Ledger,** an award-winning TV documentary giving an Indian point of view of the Hudson's Bay company. Two years later, Defalco was back in the Northern Prairies, in the dead of winter, filming **Cold Journey.**

Defalco was born in Ottawa in 1933, attended Ottawa Technical High School and St. Patrick's College. After a checkered career as a shipper, a bank teller and a try at the Canadian Air Force, he decided to get into motion pictures... and stayed.

Defalco is married and has five children.

grass roots distribution

george pearson and anthony kent

***Cold Journey** is one of the few feature films ever made at the National Film Board. Why was the film made as a feature rather than the traditional NFB documentary?*

George Pearson: When you think of feature films, you think of entertainment, mass audience, commercial. **Cold Journey** was given the go-ahead on the basis that it is within the NFB mandate to make feature films in the public interest, on some social or ethnic problem in the country — in this case the whole business of native education. It wasn't strictly a decision to make a feature film, but when we came down to it, the dramatic form and feature length seemed to be right for the material and for the magnitude of the issue we were dealing with.

The film was also unusual in that the NFB later became involved in the distribution of the film.

George Pearson: It was the first film we ever distributed. Normally we write a contract with a commercial distributor who takes care of all distribution arrangements. We didn't want to lose control of **Cold Journey** to a commercial distributor who would have invested money in the distribution and then locked up the film for a minimum of five years. The NFB wouldn't have been able to touch the film for non-theatrical release before that time was up. But, although we had said the purpose of the film was not to make it a commercial success but to do a job of public information on a certain critical condition, the finished film did look like it had some commercial potentiel. We just weren't sure how long it would last in theatrical release, through we wanted to give it a chance. With financial assistance from the Secretary of State, we put together a whole promotion campaign and launched the film. It was doing well in the theatres where we opened. At the same time though, pressure was growing from other users of our films to release **Cold Journey** for non-theatrical distribution. Finally, we withdrew it from commercial release and started to concentrate on non-theatrical distribution.

Anthony Kent: We held special launchings in Regina and Edmonton, planned in collaboration with Indian Affairs, the Secretary of State and the local Indian organizations. In that way we were able to spread the word about the film before we started the grass roots distribution. Now the film is shown in church halls, mission and residential schools, council houses — virtually anywhere you can put up a projector. It has been shown on TV in the three Scandinavian countries and was recently sold to the CBC for Canadian television. **Cold Journey** is widely used to increase understanding in union situations, colleges and government departments across North America.

Mr. Pearson, I believe you attended some of these screenings. Can you describe audience reaction to the film?

George Pearson: There are different audiences and their reactions are fascinating. The native audience loves it every time. They see much humor in the film. A white audience by itself sees none of that humor and sometimes can feel quite threatened. They take the film as an inditement of themselves, particularly Northerners, who live and work with the Indians. What really fascinates me though, is the reaction to the film when it's a mixed white and Indian audience. The white people begin to see what the Indians see in the film and begin to understand *their* reactions. To the Indians it is a humorous film, a meaningful film. White people see the Indians reacting, moving with the film and they begin to understand the film on a level which is not so threatening. That's the ultimate point of the film, to convey to the non-Indian audience better understanding.

Indian people are often the subject of documentary films, but this is one of the first feature films in which they can see themselves in a positive light. How do you assess their feelings about the film?

George Pearson: It was understood when we started discussing the film that it had to be a true documentary, albeit drama picture, of a true native condition. After we screened the film at the annual meeting of the Indian Brotherhood of Canada we were very aware that it didn't matter what we thought of the film — either the people at Indian Affairs, or the Secretary of State or the Prime Minister of Canada. It really was totally irrelevant what we all thought. The film was successful only if the native community of Canada would admit that it was a true depiction of a real condition.

Did they?

George Pearson: They passed two resolutions at that annual Congress, one saying it was a great film and two, urging the NFB to give it the widest possible distribution. They said it was the first time native people have been portrayed with sensitivity and accuracy in the media ... really, their support was overwhelming.

"helped me to understand"

an interview with buckley petawabano by joan irving

Buckley Petawabano

In the film you and the rest of the characters retain your own names. How close did you feel to Buckley, the character you play.

In a lot of ways I was acting out the experience I had at residential school. I spent eight years in a school in Moose Factory. That's why I speak English... The prejudice and that which existed at my school was something I learned to take in stride. But acting it out in **Cold Journey** helped me to understand it. My school experience wasn't bad, it's just that I had to live with a feeling of rejection lots of times. It's sort of funny — they asked me to go back to the school to speak at an assembly as one of the successful graduates. I suppose I would have gone, but I was busy.

Did your familiarity with the situation make the job of acting easier?

When I first saw the script I thought it was good, but I knew it was going to be hard to act. I was in almost every scene and I wasn't used to having so many lines. At first I was nervous about that, but when we started shooting I overcame it. I learned a lot about acting, and about filmmaking. At that time I was starting to be intrigued with the process of making films. Now I'd rather make a film than act in one.

After your roles in **Adventures in Rainbow Country** *and* **Cold Journey,** *you've become something of a star, certainly in the native community. How do you feel about that?*

People tease me about it and, in a way, it's a compliment. But it's really hard to get out of the star system. You come down with a crash. I joke about it; I don't take it too seriously. Now I'm trying to get an Indian crew together to make a film. There'll be other Indian films with Indian actors.

johnny yesno

His start in movies came when, tired of seeing white actors playing Indians, he went to the CBC casting office to try his luck at getting "one of those red man roles". He got the lead in the premiere episode "The Last Man In The World" of the popular *Wojeck* series and won the highly prized Wilderness Award for best actor in 1967. His work for the CBC continued, but with radio this time, as host-producer of **Our Native Land.**

At 36, he works now as a freelancer, sometimes acting, sometimes as a communications consultant to various Indian organizations, attached currently to the Nishnawobe Institute in Toronto, an Indian cultural organization. His latest TV role is in a Northwest Mounted Police Arctic documentary drama on CBC called **Lost Patrol,** which will be released this fall. In fiction films, Yesno had the lead in Walt Disney's **King of the Grizzlies** and more recently played in the Canadian Film **Inbreaker.**

Yesno was born in Fort Hope on the Albany River which flows into Hudson Bay, the oldest of 11 children. He went to residential schools at Sioux Lookout and Sault Ste. Marie and later studied engineering at the University of Waterloo but gave that up after 2 years in favor of acting.

And about that name, Yesno. It's for real. It came about when his great grandfather, an Indian chief, while dealing with Indian agents would say "yes" to part of a treaty (that was good for the Indians) and "no" to the rest (which were concessions to the white man). They dubbed him Yes-no.

buckley petawabano

Buckley Petawabano, star of **Cold Journey,** is a Cree Indian, born 27 years ago in a tent on the family trap-lines near Lake Mistassini some 400 miles due north of Montreal.

Petawabano's life history seems to have prepared him perfectly for his part in **Cold Journey.** At six he was sent away to residential school, first at Moose Factory and later at Sault Ste. Marie. And for the next 12 years he saw his family for only six weeks each summer. In 1969 he spent a year at McGill working towards an arts degree but then other things started happening and he abandoned that. He won the co-starring role in the CBC's television series **Adventures in Rainbow Country** and that in turn led to his movie part.

Petawabano spent two years working at the National Film Board, learning about the other side of movie making. For the last two years he has taught communications at Manitou College, a native school 125 miles north of Montreal. Making films is currently more interesting to Petawabano than acting in them.

He is now involved with the NFB's Challenge for Change unit, working on a series of films on Indian education, looking at how Indians are learning to adapt to white man's society, and at what alternatives there could be to Reserves.

chief dan george

Chief Dan George is probably best known for his role in Hollywood's **Little Big Man** for which he received an Oscar nomination as best supporting actor.

In his 70s, Dan George is a former chief of the Inlet people and an honorary chief of the Shuswap and Squamish tribes. He was born in 1899 on what is now Burrard Reserve N. 3, just northeast of downtown Vancouver. He has lived there all his life except for 12 years away at a Catholic boarding school. That's where he got his name — a teacher who couldn't pronounce Tes-wah-no called her five-year-old pupil Dan George.

In 1920 he began working on the Vancouver docks, starting at 40 cents an hour for a 10-hour day. He had to quit after 27 years when a swinging timber smashed all the muscles in one hip. He got no compensation and no pension.

His oldest son got him his first acting job — he was in the CBC's **Cariboo Country** series when they needed someone to play an old Indian. For Dan George, then 55, it was right up his alley. He appeared in seven episodes, several CBC Festival productions and the movie adapted from one of them, **Smith,** starring Glenn Ford.

Dan George now lives in a small white cottage about 100 yards from where he was born. And he expects to be around for some time yet — his uncle lived to 110, his mother to 95.

willie dunn

Willie Dunn is a folksinger, filmmaker, a Micmac Indian.

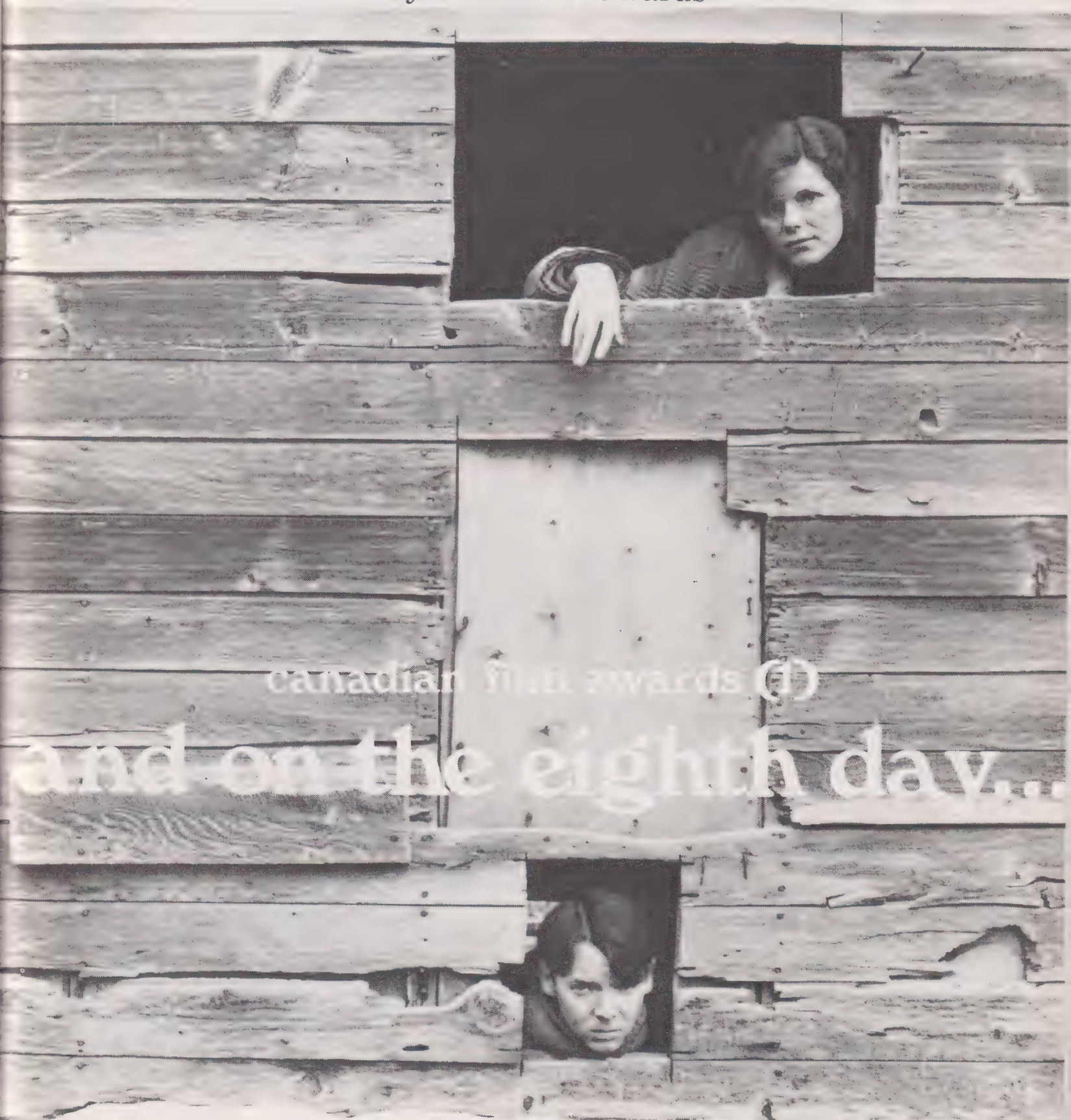
He was born on the Restigouche Reserve, on the border between Québec and New Brunswick in 1942. His mother was a Micmac Indian, his father a Scottish boilermaker. He made his first film, **Ballad of Crowfoot,** in 1969 under the aegis of the Challenge for Change Unit of the National Film Board. The project started when a group of Indians from the Company of Young Canadians wanted to make — or rather remake — the history of the Canadian West, reflecting the traditions, attitudes and problems of their people. Dunn directed the film, wrote the music and words for it.

In the same year, also for Challenge for Change, he directed a film called **These are my People,** reflecting the impact of the white man's arrival on the Indian way of life and a glimpse as what the future might bring. Dunn then wrote the music to **Who Were the Ones?** a film of dramatic color artwork showing the Indians' view of North American history after the white man's arrival. In 1972 Dunn co-directed the award-winning TV documentary **The Other Side of the Ledger** and wrote its songs. It's another film from the Indian viewpoint, this time about the Hudson's Bay Company.

He wrote three songs for **Cold Journey,** based on the Indian Theme. Besides writing music for NFB films, he writes for the CBC and is now writing for himself. With two albums cut and a Canada Council grant, he wants to perform, sing and make this own films.

CFA selection committee members toiled for seven long days to screen 11 fiction features and 126 documentaries, shorts, animated works and TV dramas. On the eighth day they voted, and went home to sleep.

by Nathalie Edwards



Two actors who weren't nominated though the film, **Why Shoot the Teacher,** was

In an effort to provide more time for publicity of the finalists for the 28th Canadian Film Awards, the Committee devised a new selection system for the 1977 event. Neither Oscar-emulating craft votes nor empire-fuilding guilds were to have full power – nor was an impressive jury of performers, academics and Respected Types to take the final responsibility. Instead, each of the 12 member organizations of the Canadian Film Awards Committee was to select two representatives to share the duties of both judge and jury. First, they would screen and vote for the four finalists in all categories for Best Film, and the craft award finalists in fiction feature as well as non-fiction-feature film; then second, they would make a final vote to be sealed and sent to Morris Klayman, C.A. for the announcements on November 20 at the banquet in the Convention Centre of the Toronto Harbour Castle Hilton Hotel.

Delegates were also invited from across Canada. Attending were Ron Robertson of Alberta, representing ACCESS, Len Klady of the Winnipeg Film Group, and Lionel Simmons of the Atlantic Film Co-op. Roch Demers tried, but no Quebecois appeared to be available for the strenuous week, BCFIA didn't respond, and Saskatchewan was not asked, an omission which Executive Director Pat Thompson says will certainly be rectified next year.

From the member organizations of CFA's board, the following representatives donated their time or were paid by their organizations to attend the screenings: ACTRA, Jim Henshaw (writers), and Gerard Parkes (actors); CFTA, Gunter Oldenburg; CMPDA, Jim Murphy from Twentieth Century; CSC, Al Rubin; CCFM, Natalie Edwards and Ed Jull; DGC, Barbara Laffey (features only) and Bob Barclay, Alfred Benson and Vlad Goetzelman (all other categories); AICMPD, Linda Beath, manager of New Cinema, and Laela Weizweig of Danton Films (both for features, and shared other categories); MPTAC, Jeremy Katz of Twinex, Brian Lester, independent booker; CFEG, Brian Ravok (features only) and Ron Sanders. CAMPP's selected representative Harve Sherman was missing, while the AFM's John Allison could only stay for some of the features and therefore agreed to withdraw his vote.

This working jury started as the usual group of disparate types, eyeing each other suspiciously, each wondering how ill-qualified or prejudiced the other might be. But it became a close-knit bunch of hail-fellows, with a few marys (Linda, Laela, Barbara and me) exchanging opinions gleefully, and all, without exception, impressed with the experience of seeing a solid week of Canadian product and getting to know people in different aspects of the industry.

There was a fiery debate when Linda Beath's possible conflict of interest as a distributor was queried. The group finally decided that she had so many films in competition (**J.A. Martin** and **Outrageous,** with two others under consideration), and that Laela Weinzweig of Danton, or Jim Murphy of Twentieth Century, or for that matter Jeremy Katz of Twinex or practically anyone else, could be considered to have conflicting interest too, that the solution was to accept all votes and figure whatever conflicts there were in the end would cancel each other out.

The jury was strong – and even bloody-minded on some points. The CBC was roundly condemned for not using enough Canadian talent in starring roles, though it was commended for the high quality of some of the shows that did. The NFB came in for furious criticism because it ignored entrance rules requiring all films to be in English, or subtitled, dubbed or accompanied by a synopsis (for the sake of the English-speaking jurors) and entered a number of films that looked interesting, but the jury felt incompetent to judge, and was forced to omit.

The consensus on this point was that the NFB's lack of proper subtitling was unforgivable, and strong words were spoken about the responsibility of the NFB to lead the way in making films accessible in both languages in this country, the obvious need for subtitling, which should be automatically budgeted, and the presumption and arrogance that led to entering films in competition without following the rules which others were expected to obey.

The jurors had another problem with the abundance of CBC and NFB films entered; how to judge works made with large budgets and under protected circumstances, with low-budget, homespun films made under the strain of time and financial pressure and the insecurity of marketless conditions? There was some talk of devising another category for big corporations and sponsored films. And speaking of categories, it was also deplored that the category for Experimental Film was removed this year making it appear the CFA didn't care about experimentalists, and causing several films to find no comfortable category in which to compete.

Finally, everyone became an expert on the 1977 Canadian psyche: Judging from these 137 films, we still appear to be hung up on scenes of bucolic bliss, a nostalgic and apparently endless re-examination of our past, and a sense of physical fitness, wholesomeness and mental discipline that seemed totally foreign to most of the urban, decadent and contemporary types sprawled around the screening room in

After winning at Cannes, Monique Mercure wins again in Toronto, (from **J.A. Martin photographe**)

What's in an initial?...

ACTRA	Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists
ACCESS	Alberta Educational Communications Corp.
BCFIA	British Columbia Film Industries Association
CFTA	Canadian Film and Television Association
CSC	Canadian Society of Cinematographers
CCFM	Council of Canadian Filmmakers
CMPDA	Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association
DGC	Directors Guild of Canada
AICMPD	Association of Independent and Canadian-Owned Motion Picture Distributors
MPTAC	Motion Picture Theatre Association of Canada
CFEG	Candian Film Editors Guild
CAMPP	Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers
AFM	American Federation of Musicians

Nathalie Edwards, Toronto film critic, is president of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre and serves on the Board of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.

Hollis McLaren, who was nominated for **Outrageous**

Len Cariou in his tough-reporter-with-a-heart role in **One Man**

the basement of the Twinex Building in scrungy downtown Toronto.

Each member of the Committee maintained that seeing this wealth of Canadian films, despite a certain repetitiveness of subject, occasional blandness and neutrality, was a real eye-opener, and wished that co-workers and industry friends could see for themselves the amazing talent and training that Canadian filmmakers exhibited.

In previous years, to some extent, they could. After the Film Awards were reorganized in 1967, Gerald Pratley took a package of winning films in 16mm around the country, where, with the help of co-operating film societies and other organizations, free showings were arranged for the public. Gerald remembers doing this four times from 1969 to 1972, with Pat Thompson sharing the country with him in 1970. In 1973 the Film Awards were in Montreal, and the resulting fiasco caused them to disappear in 1974. In 1975 they appeared again in Niagara-on-the-Lake under the guiding hand of Sandra Gathercole, who did not have the budget to reinstate the travelling exhibition.

Nat Taylor's dominant influence as Chairman of the CFA for the second year, was felt again in the pressure to have the show appear on TV, where he feels a national broadcast will result in more public awareness of the CFA and its Etrogs. CTV's budget cuts denied them a repeat of last year's generous move of having the show broadcast from the Agincourt studio 'almost' live. So, this year Nat energetically recruited the CBC, and a taped show was offered which would be aired at 10 p.m. November 20 concurrently with the actual physical public presentation of the awards.

Taylor's business acumen and persuasive personality has also been responsible for getting the CFA on sound financial ground, and his skill at putting aside half of the Secretary of State's allotted $30,000 for 1976 so that a 1977 event could be held here, ($30,000 is to be given alternate years by the government to the English and Quebec film awards) can only be applauded.

It's regrettable, however, if directing energies toward a TV show and banquet means that there is too little time and money to arrange public screenings or the travelling exhibition of winning films. Certainly, for once, the problem with features is eased by the distribution of a number of the contenders. **Why Shoot the Teacher** is popular across Canada and **Who Has Seen the Wind** most assuredly will be too. The NFB appears to be dragging its feet in settling on a distributor for **One Man,** but before long, circumstances will force a distribution deal. Meanwhile, **Outrageous** is guaranteed good crowds and much notice in urban centres, and **J.A. Martin, photographe,** will pick up appreciative audiences in cities where the use of subtitles is acceptable. It would do even better if the NFB utilized the pool of superb radio actors in Canada and dubbed this feature with skill and sensitivity! **Rabid, Ragtime Summer** and **Rituals** are also available, and it is to be hoped that the effective chiller **Skip Tracer** soon will be too.

But the public might like to see the shorts, or have another look at the documentaries and dramas that pick up awards. Not much point in advertising Canadian film on a national broadcast, if many people never see anything but a few features, and only then if they live in major centres. Are the solutions in trying to get money for touring an exhibition, in encouraging the CBC to buy and show them, or the National Gallery to distribute "packages", or just to put them in the hands of energetic short-film distribution companies who could flog them to a public that just might be ready and curious enough to take a look at itself?

Like the Selection Committee members, they just might find the experience an "eye-opener". □

feedback

The reactions to this years Awards were spontaneous and varied. A selection of these reactions is printed below, preceeded by a short overview of the Awards through the years.

Memories run short when it comes to the Canadian Film Awards. The fact that 700 came to the dinner-presentation Sunday evening, Nov. 20, and that so many reacted so strongly is evidence that the CFA has come a long way over the last years. Or, rather, that even if the CFA has not come as far as some might wish, the Canadian film industry is travelling the distance and is not prepared to remain uninvolved in the annual awards ceremony. Up until now, the Awards have been run on mostly volunteer energy in the face of generalized industry indifference.

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The Canadian Film Awards have had a long and checkered career. By this time, they are 28 years old – a ripe age, considering that many still maintain the Canadian film industry is in its infancy.

What people forget is that, in the beginning, the industry wasn't centered around the feature films; years and years went by before there was even a 'feature' category.

For a while, showing the films to the public became important. Free screenings – or screenings for a nominal fee – were the order of the day. Still, halls remained empty for the most part as the jury sat through the hundred-odd films in search of the winners.

When Gerald Pratley founded the international jury, that was a step forward. Finally, Canadian filmmakers were ready to ask others for their opinion, to test Canadian films against an international measure.

Then came the crucial year: 1973. The Awards were moved to Montreal from Toronto because continued financial aid from the Festivals Bureau was conditional upon the move. (In subsequent years, the CFA was to alternate between the cities or even move elsewhere if possible.)

For the first time, a television show was lined up; Lise Payette, now a provincial minister, was to do the first bilingual show that CBC/Radio-Canada had ever done, live. The cast was proverbially 'all-star'.

The problem was some of the stars, the québécois filmmakers, decided to boycott the awards. The reasons given were varied and ranged from poor pre-selection to ideological opposition to the notions of competition in the arts and of the existence of 'pan-culturalism' in Canada. But the results were disastrous. The show was cancelled; the awards weren't distributed, and the organization fell apart.

One analysis had it that although the québécois didn't mind going 'abroad' (read Toronto) to pick up awards, they just couldn't permit themselves to be seen coast to coast, picking up cultural awards in harmony with their English-Canadian colleagues. That was a year in which separatism was growing among the artists in Quebec, and the Awards were held smack in the middle of a provincial election.

The following year, there was no ceremony. A meeting was called by Jean Lefebvre, director of the Bureau of Festivals, regrouping representatives of organizations interested in filming and members of the CFA committee. The spoils were divided; Toronto got the right to use the name 'Canadian Film Awards' and could request a grant every other year from the Bureau. The québécois could request the grant in the off year, and were to restructure an awards ceremony – or a festival or whatnot – which would fit the requirements of the filmmakers.

And that was that. The Quebec group never got to work seriously, no one being much interested and, certainly, no one volunteering to try to heal the many wounds caused within the québécois film community as a result of the directors' unanimous boycott.

In Toronto, Sandra Gathercole organized the remote Niagara-on-the-Lake awards and added a series of conferences, round tables and retrospectives. The participants liked the innovations but geographically, it hardly made sense.

N.A. Taylor was the only person who volunteered in '76 and'77 to head the Awards. He whipped the organization into good financial shape, twisting arms here, soliciting there, investing half of the grant money to be able to get along in the off year without government support. He all but did away with the public screenings, pushing theatre trailers for the televised awards presentation instead. In 1976, CTV did the honors. In 1977, CBC picked it up. Still a bit gun-shy about the fiasco of 1973, CBC thought pre-taping was a good idea.

Finally, in 1977, the CFA Committee did away with the jury. The pre-selection committee cast a final ballot; the winners were chosen in September.

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The following comments come from several sources. Pat Thompson, Peter Pearson, Pen Densham, Kirwan Cox and Sandra Gathercole gave their impressions to Cinema Canada on tape, the evening of the Awards. Other comments were solicited by the magazine, or came spontaneously to us, some in the form of letters to others, to be reprinted.

Connie Tadros

the hottest ticket in town...

The Awards became the hottest ticket in town about a week before the event, and that's when things began to get terrible. There were just 2 of us in the office, and 3 phone lines, so we had terrible trouble some days.

It became a hot ticket because of the industry people. We had a bigger judging group this year and I think they spread the word. And I also think that it was because we got the nominees out earlier. There were four *actual people* sitting there as "nominees", and that is a great help. It also helps the organization because you know exactly what you're dealing with... like 135 nominees instead of 260...

Patricia Thompson
Executive Director/
Canadian Film Awards

the jury...

Having been chairman of the international jury since the Canadian Film Awards were reorganised in 1968, I was naturally disappointed to see the judging changed this year to a secret vote by a panel made up of representatives of the many groups which comprise the CFA committee. This is not because I doubted the competence of those who freely volunteered their time and tested their powers of endurance to sit through the 170-odd films entered this year. Far from it. They carried out their responsibilities loyally and well, never complaining, and sitting for as many as twelve hours a day for seven days with an unfailing sense of humor and an alertness to the values they sought to reward which was worthy of the highest praise.

No, as I told the committee, I believe that secret votes are for politicians, not for judging various art forms. This is best achieved through frank and thorough discussions by a jury. While there was some discussion by the panel this year, it was limited; naturally, as the vote was secret, there was reluctance on the part of panel members to let others know what they were voting for. This cut-and-dried method takes the humanity and intellectual considerations out of the process of award giving.

I think I have said before that if the filmmakers who have entered their work in past CFA competitions knew how deeply and at what length the international juries debated their (the filmmakers') work, frequently with great admiration for and enjoyment of what they had seen, I think they would be pleased and gratified. Removing this method of evaluation, estimation and final agreement took much of the color, excitement and immediacy out of the CFA this year.

We also lost the excitement of the Festival aspect of the CFA, during which the public could see the films with the jury. This year, they were seen by the judging panel in private. The irony of the situation is that the committee changed the system to appease CTV (which wanted a carbon copy of the Academy Awards) and then backed out of its commitment to telecast the awards claiming financial difficulties. This led to the loss of secrecy ("and the winner is") when CBC stepped into the breech, but had to tape the "secret" winners before the actual presentations were made! What did Polonius say about to thine own self be true?

In spite of all this, few people, it seems, think the main awards were not justified and fair; and this is what matters long after dissatisfaction with meals and slide shows is forgotten. A voting system is bound to result in some injustices. We can thank the judging panel for using common sense resulting in there being very few of them.

Gerald Pratley
Director
Ontario Film Institute

the judging...

The judging is better, but it's not quite right yet. In my mind, it's alright for the feature films, and the two ballot system is great. It works.

The people who watched the feature films sat for 2 and a half days. They can do that. But some people sat for 84 hours of films, and then they had to do all the crafts in the 2 to 6 categories and there's something wrong there. I think we must do something about this big block of crafts which belongs to those categories.

Patricia Thompson

the fallacy of the secret ballot...

This Film Awards is an example of the fallacy of the secret ballot. In the old days, it used to be difficult because once someone won a big prize, you knew the other film would get the little prize; everything would balance out so that no one would be upset. This time, because the ballots were secret, I think everyone's second choice tended to be the winner. And, although all the films were very good, **J.A. Martin** wasn't *that* much better than **Why Shoot the Teacher** or **Outrageous.** Those 2 films just got completely wiped out. And so I think it's a shame.

Kirwan Cox
Producer and researcher

about outrageous...

I think that it was unfortunate that **Outrageous** didn't get more awards. I felt that it was a signpost film in terms of the enthusiasm it generated. I had picked **J.A. Martin** to get the major award, and I figured that was a very worthy award, but I would have liked to see **Outrageous** get a little bit of energy behind it because I think that's the kind of film that starts the mental activity going.

People like John Roberts like to have something they can hook into when they're pushing for film policy in the Cabinet. I understand he is having a hard time pushing film in the Cabinet. When you have a film you can point to that's doing it in New York and doing it in L.A. and says, 'We can make films and they can be small films and yet do big things," that's what we need.

Pen Densham
Filmmaker

the taping session...

I was really upset about the secret filming of the winners on Sunday morning. I was upset that the winners had to sneak around all day long. I think that's tacky. When we allow the television networks to control what is essentially a film event, we start to get into trouble. In point of fact, all the winners felt guilty all day long, holding secrets. That's not fair; it's certainly not fair for the losers, and it's certainly not fair for everyone who paid $25 a ticket to come and see who had won and who had lost.

I've won 17 of these awards, and every time, I've felt honored. I think that it cheapens it by forcing those who win into the ignominious position of having to hold that secret.

If the television cameras want to come in, they can do what they like. They can record it, they can edit it, they can experience it. But for them to dictate that all of us have to skulk down to some studio at nine o'clock in the morning in order to be recorded looking like idiots is unacceptable.

Peter Pearson
Filmmaker

a trip which vindicated...

I loved the Awards. I thought it was an 'up', a trip and I thought it vindicated a lot of years and a lot of work and frustration. The films and what happened tonight were truly a celebration.

Things have changed enormously over the last five years, and I speak from experience. The Film Awards have not always been something to be proud about and I thought that tonight perhaps was the way it should have been for the last 25 years. I think that there was a spirit and a feeling which I've never seen at the Awards before.

Existentially, there was a lot of self-realization tonight. There were a lot of people sitting there saying, 'My God, we actually *can* put on the Film Awards! We can even put on a show, we can even make movies.' All those unrealized potentials, which is sort of the definition of the Canadian film industry, are being realized.

Sandra Gathercole
Past-Chairperson,
Council of Canadian Filmmakers

about the québécois...

My own sense is that it's up to the québécois to determine their destiny. It's very interesting that there was a bunch of ardent separatists at the Awards who really appreciated winning.

Two years ago, Claude Jutra stomped into Niagara-on-the-Lake and denounced the Awards left, right and center. This year there were tears in his eyes, and he was very proud that once again he had been recognized. I think that Jutra has probably won more Etrogs than anybody... and it's important to him.

It's important for us to say, 'You want to come in? Fine. If you don't, that's fine too," because at a certain point, to try and coerce people into some narrow, restricted definition of the future of our country is still a denial of what we hope our country will be.

Peter Pearson

the winners

Best Films

Feature Film: J.A. Martin photographe (Jean Beaudin)
Documentary Film (60 mins. and over): The Inquiry Film (Jesse Nishihata)
Documentary Film (under 60 mins.): Greenpeace: Voyages to Save the Whales (Michael Chechik)
Animated Film: Spinolio (John Weldon)
Theatrical Short (35mm): Spartree (Phillip Borsos)
TV Drama (including drama documentaries): Dreamspeaker (Claude Jutra)

Craft Awards (Feature Film)

Direction: Jean Beaudin (J.A. Martin photographe)
Editing: Jean Beaudin/Helen Girard (J.A.Martin photographe), John Kramer (One Man)
Cinematography: Pierre Mignot (J.A. Martin photographe)
Screenplay - original: Robin Spry/Peter Pearson/Peter Madden (One Man)
Screenplay - adaptation: James DeFelice (Why Shoot the Teacher)
Sound Recording: Claude Hazanavicius (One Man)
Sound Editing: Les Halman/Ken Page (One Man)
Sound Re-recording: Jean-Pierre Joutel (J.A. Martin photographe)
Original Music Score: Paul Hoffert (Outrageous)
Art Direction: Vianney Gauthier (J.A. Martin photographe)
Performance by an Actor: Len Cariou (One Man)
Performance by an Actress: Monique Mercure (J.A. Martin photographe)
Supporting Actor: Jean Lapointe (One Man)
Supporting Actress: Carol Lazare (One Man)

Craft Awards (Non-Feature films)

Direction: Claude Jutra (Dreamspeaker)
Editing: Marty Gross (Potters at Work)
Cinematography: Tim Sale/Dave Geddes/Ron Orieux/Jeff Mart (Spartree)
Screenplay - original or adaptation: Cam Hubert (Dreamspeaker)
Non-dramatic script: Donald Brittain (Henry Ford's America)
Sound Recording: Fred Easton/Chris Aikenhead/Michael Chechik (Greenpeace: Voyages to Save the Whales)
Sound Editing: Raymond Hall (Spartree)
Sound Re-recording: Barry Jones (Spartree)
Original Music Score: Jean Cousineau (Dreamspeaker)
Art Direction: Evelyn Roth (Woven in Time)
Performance by an Actor: George Clutesi (Dreamspeaker)
Performance by an Actress: Marina Dimakopoulos (Happiness Is Loving Your Teacher)
Supporting Actor or Actress: Jacques Hubert (Dreamspeaker)

Special Awards

The Wendy Michener Award: – To Zale R. Dalen for his feature film, Skip Tracer.
Special Award of the Judging Group: – To Ralph Thomas, who has increased the stature of film drama on television in Canada.
The Grierson Award: – To Fernand Dansereau of Ste. Foy, Que.

a big non-event...

As members of Canada's film community, we would like to protest the biggest non-event of this or any other year, namely the 1977 Canadian Film Awards.

Our feelings ran the gamut from embarrassment to anger at the ineptitude and dullness of what should have been a glittering celebration.

The food belonged in a roadside diner (what was it?) and was served by the clumsiest waiters this side of the Mack Sennett studios.

As the awards presentation began, we tried to follow the categories as printed in the program. There was no corresponding order between that program and the proceedings before us. Hence confusion.

Rumors were rampant that the award winners had already been informed, and in fact taped in a CBC studio the previous day. The rumors proved true. Sitting at our and adjacent tables, were nominees who, at their own expense, curtailed schedules in order to fly back from New York and Los Angeles, only to be confronted with day old news that they were not winners. Surely a courtesy call would have been in order to give these nominees the option of not incurring expenses for an evening which was not to be theirs. Had the awards been conducted in a proper manner, where no one knew until the envelope was opened who the winners were to be, then the air of excitement and anticipation would have justified everyone's participation in the evening.

The ultimate insult was that the television audience at home found out who all the winners were before those at the actual presentation.

Instead of glamor, sophistication, wit and production values, we were treated to stultifying speeches and an interminable dissertation with slides on Canadian film history, which set a new record in boring an audience to drink. (The tragedy being the bar closed at 7 p.m.).

When will the gremlins who organized the Canadian Film Awards wake up to the fact that the procedure used by the Americans and the British for their Academy Awards *works* and adopt the same system?

It is a sad state of affairs, that twenty-two people, many of whom have had little or no direct involvement in feature-film production in this country, are chosen (how and by whom are they chosen?) to sit in judgement and determine the fate of Canadian films.

As far as we are concerned, the Canadian Film Awards are important and worthwhile if treated with the honor, respect, excitement and celebration that they so richly deserve. We look forward to such an occasion next year and plan to forget the unmitigated shambles of 1977.

Paul Grose, GKO Associates Ltd.
Lynn Kinney, GKO Associates Ltd.
Michael Oscars, GKO Associates Ltd.
Pamela B. Friendly, GKO Associates Ltd.
Jill de Wolfe James, Astral Bellevue Pathe.
Richard Conkie, Richard Conkie Casting.
Larry Dane, Canart Films.
Clare Walker and Stuart Aikens,
Canadian Casting Associates.
Linda Shapiro, Publicist.
Michael Kirby, Actor.
Nuala Fitzgerald, Actress.
And many others.

not representative...

The letter below was sent to Millard Roth, executive director of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors' Association in response to his memo requesting opinions on the CFA from some of the association's members.

I have your memorandum of November 24 and appreciate your asking for comments. I did attend the film awards on "that fateful night". I must, however, admit to the fact that I did leave early. Possibly my early departure reflects my overall opinion of what was transpiring.

Millard, I realize it is very easy to complain about what goes on in our industry and that is certainly not my intention at this time; however, I feel very strongly that the Canadian Film Awards for 1977 have, in effect, set the industry back fifteen years.

Without knowing all the intricate details, it is impossible for me to lay the blame on someone's doorstep even if that was my desire, which it is not.

The results of the 1977 Canadian Film Awards would indicate that the Jury would correspond to the New York Film Critics and the awards they give each year, or the critics' best ten list in America. This statement is not made with any intention of demeaning these worthy groups; however, they seek and stress other qualities in feature motion pictures than does the American Academy of Arts and Sciences at Oscar time.

In past years, possibly the choice has been extremely limited and a result such as 1977 would have been inevitable; however, it is unfortunate that such a choice was made in 1977 when there were a number of much more suitable (in my opinion) motion pictures available, and I refer to such films as **Why Shoot the Teacher** and **Who Has Seen the Wind.**

If the Canadian Film Awards are to serve a useful purpose, then I feel that their major function is to reward and encourage motion picture production that stresses artistic and technical excellence together with basic entertainment.

Our industry is not an exact science, Millard. Both you and I know this, and a great many aspects that I am discussing here overlap, but what went on during the 1977 Awards was not, in my opinion, beneficial to the industry. I left a great many people totally bewildered as to what it was all about.

I do indeed feel that this program should be in different hands.

Mickey Stevenson
Distributor
Astral Films

a sham...

The following letter was written to David Perlmutter, President of the Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers.

As everyone present at this year's Canadian Film Awards knows, the event was an embarrassing exercise akin to a high-school prom. As a producer with a film in nomination my instinctive reaction was outrage. On the spur of the moment I promised myself never to allow another one of my films to be a part of such an amateurish sham. I am sure that all of you feel equally affronted.

On further thought, however, to abort the Canadian Film Awards by withholding films is, although well deserved, not in the best interests of the film industry. I propose instead, that the structure of the Awards be radically

revamped, or, if the Awards' current management opposes drastic changes, that a real Canadian Film Awards be organized by the parties most involved, starting with producers and directors.

Our industry sorely needs its own heroes, folklore and mythology, in short, a kind of glamor that only constant exposure to the limelight and the public can create. Only when we can feed audiences with glittering fantasies the way Hollywood does so well, can we develop our own stars, household names and personalities, who in turn would make our films that much more bankable, and bring a bazzaz to our industry that is still sadly lacking.

An annual film award presentation is an ideal vehicule for accomplishing this, and as producers I think it is incumbent on us to insure that such a ceremony exist, and that it be properly orchestrated. The following are some suggestions for the obvious changes that this would require:

1. The jury system as it exists is utterly impractical and unrepresentative. An Academy structure must be set up, so that nominations and awards are decided upon by a broad base of qualified individuals that would accurately represent a full cross-section of the industry.

2. The categories in which awads are given should be re-examined. Best Picture Awards for example, should obviously be presented to the film's producer. The multitude of craft awards for shorts and documentaries has to be abolished or at any rate separated from the Awards ceremony. So long as we are giving awards for best sound-editing and best art-direction for a short in the same breath as best actor or best director for a feature, we are eliminating any possibility of wide public appeal and relegating major feature films to the same pathetic public apathy that is the inevitable fate of government funded documentaries. The Film Awards should be reserved for theatrical features only, with just one award for best documentary and one for best animation instead of the plethora of categories that make the current format inherently dull and unmaneagable.

3. The idea of feeding more than 600 people seated around tables is ill-conceived. As evidenced this year, the concoction that results is hopelessly inedible and automatically sinks the proceedings to an irredeemable level of tackiness. Instead, there should be an open bar with hors d'oeuvres and free-flowing drinks available without the insult of having to line up for tickets. The presentations should follow on a lavishly dressed stage in a large theatre.

4. The proceedings should obviously be televised live. Pretaping the results in order to accommodate the CBC is a moronic notion that is best forgotten. It simply annihilates the suspense and emotions necessary to make an interesting show.

5. The $25.00 charge per person must not apply to those nominated for an award. It is embarrassing to have to pay in order to be celebrated. By eliminating the awards for shorts, the number of nominees will be drastically reduced. The resulting loss of revenue can be more than compensated for by the larger attendance that the elimination of the banquet format can accommodate.

6. The presentation should include the performance of the best songs to add entertainment value.

7. Truly prominent members of the industry and V.I.P.'s from other arenas should be asked to present awards. It is unforgiveable that not a single celebrated Canadian actor, director, or writer was invited to the show to present an award. The awards should be presented by the most active and best known members of the industry, and they should be organized with enough professionalism to ensure that celebrities attend.

8. The show should be properly rehearsed in order to cut down on primitive errors and set up an exciting pace. There is no excuse for out of focus projection, sound problems, and incessant gaffes by the M.C.'s.

9. To work well, the event has to be properly financed. The Festivals Bureau and other sources should be enlisted.

10. The Canadian Film Awards is no place for one-man ego trips and incestuous nostalgia. If the current management insists on sabotaging the Awards with boring and extraneous material, they should be retired forthwith.

11. It baffles me that none of the co-productions was nominated for an award. Co-productions obviously qualify as Canadian films except in those categories in which non-Canadians were employed. (The same applies to Certified Canadian Features.) A co-production should also qualify for best picture if it is majority Canadian.

Next year promises to be the most important one yet in the history of Canadian films. With nearly a dozen major films of international scope in the can this year, and many more to come before the end of 1978, we have graduated from the junior leagues. The Canadian Film Awards hasn't, and it is up to us to see that it does. The Film Awards is the only forum we have to honour those who excel in Canadian films. To demean that honor in conferring it is intolerable.

I think now is the time for CAMPP to begin dialogue about next year's Awards, and with that in mind, I hereby request that the subject be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Lantos

i quit (almost)...

I was both a jurist and a distributor of many films entered this year. (I raised that question too, but the organizers wanted me to be on it anyway...) From the point of view of being a part of the jury, I am really distressed that the Awards came out the way they did... but the organizing committee should have realized that the bastard child of the academy system and the jury system had to be either a jury without a voice (and hence no real control), or a wildly unrepresentative democratic blunder.

From the point of view of the distributor, I really question the value of entering a film and working with filmmakers and producers (both NFB and independents this year), only to have their national exposure and personal time wasted on such an event. The suspense of a secret ballot was only in evidence when we voted; the NFB knew at least a week before the television taping what was up... or so one of their people told me. (A leak by the organizers?) The television taping was ladled on us as a necessity. By whom, and why was the industry not better informed about the situation?

Finally, a personal point. I know that the emotions of a winner-loser situation are delicate at the least, but it seems to me that the organizers were walking through the tulips in Greb steel-toed boots. None of the people I work with, and none I talked to, were happy with the way they were treated. The jury, for example, spent an ungodly week screening in very bad conditions and received a $15 per diem. We were then sent a thank you letter and were told that no free tickets were given away.

My strongest reaction to the whole fiasco was to swear never to participate again. Since it is over, my swearing an oath has dulled a bit, so I revise that statement to admit that with a new attitude, new organizers and new rules, the Canadian Film Awards may be good in the future.

Linda Beath
Distributor, New Cinema

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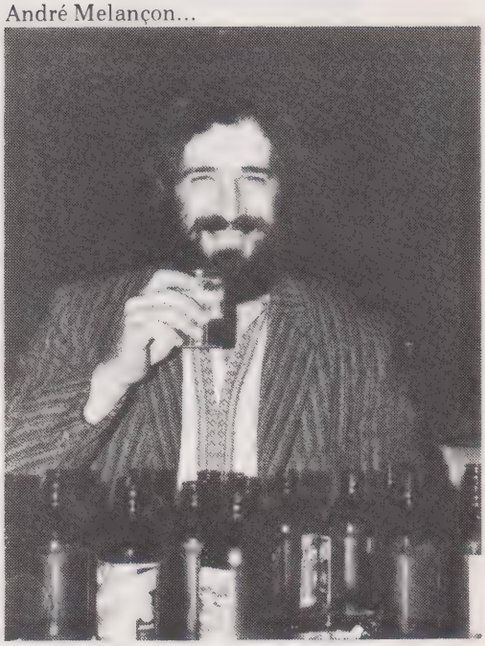
by Nik Burton

Jury members George Anthony...

Don Owen...

André Melançon...



photos by CineMag

Anyone who had the faintest objection to eating Hungarian goulash and watching the Shepherd's Dance until 1:30 a.m. had no business being at the Yorkton International Film Festival this year. The festival was determinedly multi-cultural and relaxedly unpunctual.

Nik Burton, a freelance writer from Regina, is director of the Saskatchewan Writers Guild.

Any event involving a number of people, especially a cultural event, and especially one that brings in professional people from down East, has a great potential for friction, alienation and its defense mechanism – apathy. But Don Humphries, Festival Executive Secretary and chief organizer, hasn't spent most of his working life involved with community people and community politics for nothing. The casual, relaxed manner of the proceedings made sure no one

felt herded; it wasn't too "slick". The multi-cultural events, such as the Yorkton Regional High School band, ethnic dances and multi-cultural march-on on opening night, and the Hungarian night that wrapped everything up, were made an integral part of the festival. The familiarity of these events to local people, and the open astonishment and delight of the conference guests at this unaccustomed treat, served to draw people together, made the giving and the showing go both ways, and made the visitors less threatening.

Inevitably, though, the character and tone of a cultural event such as a film festival is determined by the professional people that are brought in. The guests, delegates, and especially the adjudicators, who were most in the public eye, made this festival the artistic success it was; a more splendid trio of judges could not have been found. The adjudicating team – and a team they were – consisted of Toronto Sun Entertainment Editor and Film Critic, George Anthony, well-known Toronto-based film director Don Owen, and award-winning Quebec filmmaker, scriptwriter and actor, André Melançon.

In an occupation littered with inflated ego-trips and personality conflicts, these three worked together perfectly, beautifully, complementing and reinforcing one another. Humphries explained their approach to the film adjudication: "George was the organizer and the critic, André was the perception, and Don was the conscience." Far from doing a merely routine job on the staggering task of viewing over 150 films in 4 days and making 17 awards, they brought imagination and intelligence to the job, shifting films to another category for an award they felt it deserved and creating several new categories where they were needed. Their selection for the over-all Golden Sheaf award was made with such insight and feeling for this country and its culture that no one need doubt or fear for the future of Canadian film in the hands of such as these.

In public, their actions were outrageous enough to make them credible as true film personalities, while at the same time being positively civilized about it, not taking their *gaucherie* too seriously.

The dedication to filmmaking in Canada, commitment to the success of the Yorkton International Film Festival, and respect for the people of Yorkton displayed by all the adjudicators and guests was typified by André Melançon. In the situation of a twofold potential for aloofness and alienation, as a successful personality in the film industry and a native Québécois, Melançon never for a minute gave up his sincere efforts to interact with the people around him. Everyone received the warmest possible greeting, questions asked of him in French were often answered in English if there were any unilingual people present, and his visible effort to always express himself in a not-perfectly familiar language made completely unnecessary his one mumbled apology for the way he talked. André earned the respect of all who met him, not to mention the lasting impression all the adjudicators made concerning the importance and viability of Canadian filmmaking and Canadian culture in general.

The Yorkton International Film Festival is a good festival, with the potential to be great. It was generally agreed that the hiring of a full-time executive secretary, done for the first time this year, contributed most significantly to its success. Important people across Canada and in other parts of the world know it's here, and are committed to its continued success. The people of Yorkton, and the festival directors have, virtually on their own, kept the festival going, on a biennial basis, longer than any other in North America. They received enough adulation for that fact this year to last them at least a decade. It is time to come to the realization that many of the problems Humphries and the board had to battle so valiantly to overcome at this festival are largely of their own making. The festival is run as a one-shot cultural event that pops up every second year, and then vanishes lock, stock, budget and Board for the next 18 months. Hence the organizational nightmares. As such, the festival reached its maximum potential this year, and only an experienced and work-crazy executive secretary made that possible. The Yorkton Festival has convinced film people that it has merit and potential, and that it is going to stick around for a good while longer. It's time the organizers convinced themselves of that fact, and started treating it accordingly, with ongoing organizing, planning, and fundraising. Even the possibility of an annual film festival is worth considering; the increase in work on events would be balanced by the elimination of going through the start-up motions every second year.

The Yorkton Film Festival works well artistically and publicly in its international format. Suggestions that it be made a strictly national festival at this point are out of line and suspect. The festival has the distinction of being *the* documentary film festival in Canada; there is no reason to make it *the* Canadian film festival. There was certainly no evidence of any Canadian films being crowded out by the international representation. All the awards went to Canadian efforts. No one can deny that the festival's major impact and major encouragement is to Canadian films and filmmakers. Why turn it into an introverted nationalistic affair, pointlessly cutting out the opportunity for some international standard of comparison, for the public as well as for the film people? □

THE WINNERS

Best Cinematography
Cooperate, Mercury Pictures, Vancouver
Best Experimental Film
Growing Up At Paradise, Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, Toronto
Best Nature & Wildlife Film
Return Of The Winged Giants, Dan Gibson Productions Ltd, Toronto
Best Children's Film
Illusion, Societe Radio-Canada, Montreal
Best Promotion Film
In **The Spirit Of Our Forefathers,** Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, Saskatoon
Best Information Film
V.D. The Disease You Love To Get, Tinsel & Sham Productions Ltd, Edmonton
Best Animation
Le Paysagiste / Mindscape – NFB, Montreal
Best TV Drama
Honor Thy Father, CBC-TV, Toronto
Best Arts Film
Blackwood, NFB Montreal. This film has also won the *Best Sound Editing award.*
Best Sports & Recreation Film
I'll Go Again, NFB, Montreal. This film aslo wins *Best Films Editing.*
Best Documentary
Los Canadienses, NFB, Montreal.
Best Actress
Jackie Burroughs, **If Wishes Were Horses,** Insight Productions Inc., Toronto.
Best Actor
Gordon Pinsent, **Horse Latitudes,** Roxebud Productions, Toronto. This film has also won the festival awards for *Best Adventure Film* and *Best Director* Peter Rowe.
Golden Sheaf Award
High Grass Circus, NFB, Montreal.

TECH NEWS

by Rodger J. Ross

IMAGE TRANSFORM: HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

The methods used to make transfers from videotape to color film by the Image Transform process have been a well kept secret. But now, in the August 1977 issue of SMPTE *Journal,* there is a description of the process by Pete Comandini which discloses most of the information needed to understand how the transfers are made.

Transferring television pictures and sound to film used to be called kinescope recording. In the old days before videotape this was the only way to capture and retain the video signals for later use. The term "kinescope recording" had its origin in the method used to make the recordings – a film camera was set up in front of a television picture tube, which was given the name "kinescope" in the early days of television. Millions of feet of film were used to make kinerecordings for delayed telecast, and often for direct screen projection as well, but in spite of the most strenuous efforts, the quality of the recordings was usually only fair to poor. Some people blamed the film process for the unsatisfactory results, while others insisted the television pictures were at fault, being excessively variable in appearance.

When videotape recorders began to arrive in television stations in the late 1950's, pictures played back from the tapes were almost indistinguishable from the pictures produced by studio cameras. This, almost everyone agreed, would soon put an end to kinerecording. But some people in the industry were convinced there would be a continuing need for film copies of videotape recordings. One of these was John Lowry of Toronto, who set to work to develop a process that would produce pictures from tape suitable for showing on large theatre screens. This process, given the name Image Transfer, moved to Hollywood in 1972, with Mr. Lowry as vice-president, and quickly gained a world-wide reputation as the best method for transfering videotape to film. It is an expensive method, but the results are outstanding compared with other transfer methods.

Television people with a knowledge of the principles of image transfer have assumed that Image Transform's secret of success must be in the area of video signal processing. This has now been confirmed with Mr. Comandini's disclosures.

It is only necessary to look at an old kinerecording to see where major improvements need to be made. First of all, the 30 per second television frame rate has to be converted to the standard motion picture rate of 24 per second. This can be accomplished by dropping out portions of the television frames, or entire television fields. Image Transform has devised a much more sophisticated method of frame rate conversion. At the same time, another major problem has to be corrected – noise must be reduced. (Video noise has an appearance similar to excessively grainy film pictures).

Noise is reduced in the Image Transform process by combining four adjacent frames. All picture elements that are similar in the four frames come out with unity gain, while picture elements that are not the same are reduced in level by 75 percent. Since video noise is random modulation, the effect is to reduce the noise in the pictures to a quarter of its original level.

This technique is extremely effective until something in the picture moves, but with the aid of a computer, moving patterns can be differentiated from random noise, and a continuous switch or mix is performed in the four frames being processed. This rather complicated technique has distinct advantages over other methods of noise reduction, and it has some other very attractive features as well. As the computer is always manipulating a series of four adjacent frames, it only has to be instructed as to the input rate and the desired output rate to achieve frame rate conversion. The frame rate change is accomplished by recomposing the combined frames in a different series. This eliminates the need to discard entire frames or fields, and overcomes a major disadvantage of the ordinary kinerecording process.

Electronic signals are subject to distortion at all points from origination to display. Some of the most common are smearing and ringing, and horizontal timing errors between chrominance and luminance signals. An even more serious problem in any transfer process is poor resolution – lack of sharpness – in the film pictures.

Smearing can be corrected by generating an identical effect opposite in polarity and combining the two signals, but ringing is far more difficult to remove. Sharpness of the pictures can be improved by a process known as image enhancement where the risetime at the edges of picture elements is amplified. The Image Transform enhancement system is frequency selective, treating separately the low, medium and high frequency signal elements. The medium and high frequency risetime amplification is most important for visual sharpness. This enhancement is applied in the luminance channel only.

The transfer system has adjustments for gamma, gain and pedestal in each of the three primary color channels, as well as color phase and saturation. When a transfer is being made, needed corrections are determined during an initial preview run. These corrections are stored in the computer memory. The color balance

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Long time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, ***Television Film Engineering*** *and* ***Color Film for Color Television,*** *has won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and is presently chairman of the SMPTE Board of Editors.*

of successive scenes can be checked by freezing the scene in the computer and stopping the VTR. Another command backs up the VTR to the previous scene and automatically replays each scene with corrections.

A basic incompatibility between television and film is to be found in the area of colorimetry. The NTSC television system utilizes narrow band light emissions from phosphors. When these colors are reproduced on film, colorimetry errors occur due to the differences in spectral distributions of the tube phosphors and the film dyes. These errors can be compensated for by a form of signal predistortion known as masking.

If, for example, a yellow color in the television picture reproduces in the film as dark yellow-orange, the luminance can be raised and the hue shifted towards yellow-green. This method of color correction gives acceptable results in most cases, but it is impossible to exactly match the film and television colors. Television colors are produced by an additive mixture of narrow bands of spectral energy, while film utilizes subtractive dyes that transmit a much wider spectrum. Then, in projection of the film transfers, different types of light sources, with different spectral energy distributions may be used.

The demand for high-quality tape-to-film conversions in the theatrical feature film market provided the inspiration for Image Transform. By the simple procedure of re-timing the vertical interval in NTSC recordings to a rate of 24 frames per second, a 655-line 24-frame picture was produced. This provided additional lines to give higher definition and reduced line structure effects, while the 24 frames-per-second rate gave a one-to-one relationship with film. This technique had been suggested many years earlier but was not developed because the necessary facilities were not available.

The ability to change video frame rates suggests the possibility of application in standards conversion – that is, to convert the North American 525-line 60-field television to the European 625-line, 50-field system, and vice versa. However, that process is much more complicated than changing the 30-frame television rate to the standard film rate of 24 frames per second.

The Image Transform system is protected by a number of US. patents listed in the SMPTE paper.

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Note to Canadian distributors: We would like to include the names and addresses of Canadian distributors of equipment and services mentioned in this section. Please ask your suppliers to give Canadian sources in their publicity releases. Ed.

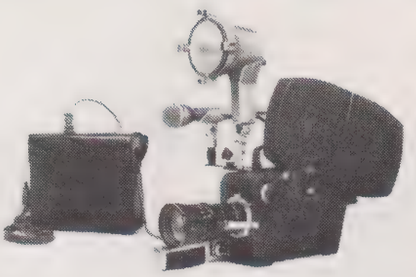
Super 8 Editing Table

PGP Consultants Ltd. of 325 Grande Caroline, Rougemont, Que., has announced their Model AD11 horizontal editing table, which accomodates one Super 8 picture and one Super 8 full coat sound track. The table has four independent winding motors and an inching knob is provided for manual operation. The film head has an eight-sided prism and the picture is projected from the rear on a day-light ground glass. A built-in speaker is provided for the sound, as well as jacks for earphones or a remote speaker. The picture film and sound track can be uncoupled and moved independently. Forward and reverse speeds are continuously adjustable up to 62 frames/sec. A 5-digit frame counter is included.

PGP Editing Table

New CP Newslite From Cinema Products

A new lightweight CP/Newslite 12V/100W lighting system, available from Cinema Products Corp., is said to be ideal for use with the new, faster film stocks such as Eastman VNF 7250 and Fugicolor RT400, both rated at 400 ASA, in most television newsgathering, documentary and similar applications. This lighting unit consists of a focusing CP newslite, with a 100W/12V 3400° K quartz lamp, and a 12V battery with built-in charger.



CP/Newslite

It is designed for top-mounting on CP-16, CP-16R and other 16mm cameras. It weighs only 19 oz and is priced at $85 (US) less lamp. The battery weighs 6 lbs and can be recharged overnight. It is priced at $275 (US). Write Cinema Products Corp., 2037 Granville Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025 for further information.

Neutaper – A Splicer for the Film Library, from Neumade

No scraping, no cement – just place the ends of cut film on the die plate, pull tape across, lower handle, depress, and that's it. Fold perforated tab over (does not cover the sound track) and wrap-around splice is complete. The Neutaper perforates the sprocket holes and trims the edges of the tape accurately. It's stronger than a cement splice, the maker claims. The unit is precision made, with cast aluminum base and handle. Punchouts stay in the base. Neutaper pays for itself as it uses non-perforated tape in rolls at savings of about 75%, compared with prepunched tape patches. Three models are available, from $301 to $365. Rutherford Photo Ltd., 211 Laird Dr., Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa and Montreal.

Cinema Canada

BOOK REVIEWS

This Is Where We Came In

by Martin Knelman,
McClelland and Stewart,
176 pages, $5.95 paperback
(ISBN 0-7710-4533-6).

"The most *influential* film reviewer in Canada right now is Clyde Gilmour," a Toronto distributor recently told me. "A positive review in the *Toronto Star* can make the difference for us between fair business and no business. *The Globe and Mail* has no effect at all – because serious filmgoers don't respect Robert Martin, and general filmgoers don't follow what reviewers say anyway. *The Globe* used to matter – when Martin Knelman wrote the reviews, but now there's just Clyde and that's it."

Whatever the state of Canada's film industry, the state of Canadian film criticism appears to be worse. This is due in part to the apparent indifference of newspaper and magazine editors in utilizing such talent as there is available. *Maclean's* currently uses film reviews by the American critic John Simon; *Weekend* and *Canadian* have, so far, resisted the idea of publishing film criticism on the grounds that such writing would compete with local reviewers in the various newspapers that distribute the weekly supplements; and even prominent newspapers, such as *The Globe and Mail,* have shown a shocking lack of discernment in choosing reviewers. It's as if they preferred journalistic non-entities to possible (and possibly troublesome) "stars." *Châtelaine* settles for "mini-reviews", instead of finding – or helping to create – a major feminist critic such as Molly Haskell. There is hardly a publication in Canada that could not significantly upgrade its standards of film criticism if editors had the vision, and the will, to do so. Instead, a lot of lip-service is paid to the cause of Canadian film culture, but when it comes to the crunch, these same editors and publishers pointedly do not hire the kind of film critics who can prod, provoke, stimulate, and help make Canadian movies a lively art that is well appreciated. American films, after all, are well covered by such writers as Pauline Kael, Andrew Sarris, Rex Reed, Judith Crist, and many other critics and interviewers of note, in publications ranging from *Time* to *The Village Voice, The New York Times* to *The New Yorker.* But Canadian movies are left, in the main, to a handful of hacks who have no ideas to speak of, let alone an interesting philosophy of criticism.

The failure of editors to invest in building major critics has, I believe, contributed to the way many Canadians perceive their own movies – as drab, second-rate, earnest rather than exciting. We have lots of mediocre reviewers in this country, but they're of no help in interpreting, in a way that *generates* interest, the work of our best (or worst) filmmakers. Nowhere in Canada is there a magazine with the policy of *The New Yorker* which allows Pauline Kael and Penelope Gilliatt to alternate, in six-month terms, the writing of weekly criticism, and then to rest, read, travel, and develop themselves the remaining months of the year. Nor is there a newspaper with the policy of *The New York Times* which allows Vincent Canby, as its lead critic, to choose the movies he wants to write about, and leave those he feels no special affinity with to other film-writers (all are fulltime employees and well paid). Canby once told me that he doesn't consider himself to be "a major critic" and would never allow a collection of his reviews, or Sunday essays, to be published. "Nothing is more embarrassing," he said, "than the vain attempt to preserve the insubstantial." In the U.S., magazines, newspapers, radio and television stations, *want* "star" critics, and a lot of thoughtful effort, and money, goes into establishing such careers. And the critics themselves are creatively ambitious and work hard to produce the most distinguished articles and books they are capable of doing.

In Canada, even the few critics that are supposed to be "our best" (Robert Fulford, Martin Knelman, Clyde Gilmour), maintain their reputations with comparatively small effort. Gilmour, like Canby, doesn't aspire to produce a book about films, and doesn't believe that his daily reviews (which he has been doing now for over 25 years) are worth reprinting, having served their purpose upon first publication. Nowhere, it seems, is there a critic who takes *Canadian* films seriously enough to write an invigorating analysis of the subject, comparable to what Margaret Atwood's *Survival,* Dennis Lee's *Savage Fields,* or George Woodcock's various studies, have done for Canadian literature. Robert Fulford's anthology of reviews from *Saturday Night, Marshall Delaney at the Movies* (1974), devoted less than 70 pages to Canadian movies, none of which was new. Judged by the prevailing standards of Canadian journalism, Fulford is an entertaining gadfly; but judged by the intellectuel standards set by such books as, say, Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (a brilliant study – one *grows* by arguing with it) the ideas and values that are Fulford's stock-in-trade seem wholly unremarkable.

Martin Knelman's *This Is Where We Came In* (subtitled: The career and character of Canadian Film) appeared to be a more promising venture. It wasn't supposed to be a spin-off from already-published and paid-for journalism (the book was funded by a Senior Arts grant from the Canada Council) but rather, an original, in-depth study. The result however, three years later, is a curious book that starts off with respectably-written chapters on John Grierson, the National Film Board, and the formation of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. Then, in a changed format and style, there follow a series of chapters ("Corpses and Snow", "Culture and Kétaine", "Politics and Quebec", and others) in which Knelman combines review and interview material written over a period of years (involving such directors as Claude Jutra, Gilles Carle, Denys Arcand, Don Shebib) in a manner that ranges from elliptical to slapdash. Practically all of this material has been published in some form before (the original articles were often more coherent than the pastiches published here).

Toronto writer and film critic, John Hofsess is the author of ***Inner Views: Ten Canadian Filmmakers.***

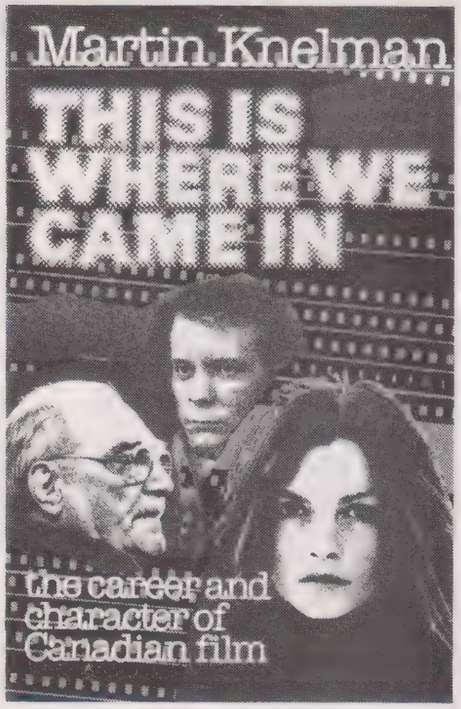
The final chapters ("Hollywood North: Notes Toward a Screen Mythology") consist of nothing except shortened versions of old reviews of such movies as **Only God Knows, Black Christmas, Act of the Heart, Fortune and Men's Eyes,** etc., ending with Knelman's reviews of **Outrageous** and **Who Has Seen The Wind** done for *Toronto Life.*

I kept asking myself while reading this book what there was in it that took three years to write? Did Knelman lose interest in the project? Was he so busy doing other journalism that the book only got small amounts of his time and that he finally just threw in 40 pages of mini-reviews to flesh out the text? Despite the assertion made throughout, that all of us should take a greater interest in the film culture of Canada, I kept wondering, if he believes it, why didn't Knelman devote himself – utterly, passionately – to writing a better book? Is *this* his limit?

Consider the style. In Chapter Four, ("From Documentaries to Features"), he writes about Pierre Perrault's **Pour la suite du monde** (1963), "one of the finest movies ever produced in Canada."

"(Perrault) chose for his collaborators Michel Brault, the son of a Westmount stockbroker, who was already earning recognition as the most gifted cinematographer in Quebec, and Marcel Carrière, a sound-man who had been at the NFB since 1956 and who had just done some stunning work in a marvelous NFB short called **Lonely Boy,** about Paul Anka, the Ottawa teenager who became an American pop star. The subject and the spirit of **Pour la suite du monde** were centuries removed from Anka's star trip – the film had greater affinity with the works of Robert Flaherty than with the *cinéma vérité* devotees who hung out with Rolling Stone groupies – but Perrault's film did have something in common with **Lonely Boy** and also with the outstanding documentaries produced in English Canada in the late sixties, Allan King's **Warrendale** and Don Shebib's **Good Times, Bad Times.** It freed itself from the stodgy conventions we had all come to associate with NFB documentaries, especially the voice-over commentary."

This is writing with a tin-ear: no sense of cadence, and little sense of logic. Not only are there too many lame adjectives ("stunning," "marvelous," "outstanding"), and irrelevant facts (who needs to be told *who* Paul Anka is, or what the occupation of Michel Brault's father was?) but the entire paragraph is a verbal clutter moving gracelessly to an anti-climax. All we really learn is that **Pour la suite du monde** didn't have a voice-over commentary (except that Knelman adds a footnote pointing out that the English version, known as **Moontrap,** *did* have such a commentary!).



It hardly seems worth the effort. One might also point out that all the films mentioned are in black-and-white – how's that for breathtaking insight! At another point, in a chapter entitled "The Children of Grierson", Knelman recounts an anecdote about a meeting between John Grierson and Sydney Newman. "On a Saturday morning in December 1971, worn down by the problem of the Quebec political films and the squeeze he was getting from the Ottawa government, Newman phoned Grierson and said, "Grierson, I don't know what to do about the Film Board. Can you help me?" Grierson said, "Right, I want to get out of this horrible little room." Grierson went over to Newman's house, and they talked out Newman's problems at the NFB for three hours. The next day Grierson left for England to spend Christmas break at his house in the country. He didn't return for the next semester. Two months later he was dead."

Naturally the reader expects to be told what transpired between the two men on this occasion (otherwise, why bring the subject up?), but in his next line Knelman writes, "Nothing John Grierson told Sydney Newman on that Saturday could have resolved Newman's problems, because the problems were part of the Grierson legacy." Either he doesn't know what was said, or nothing of any importance was said; in any case his anecdotal lead-in leads nowhere. At another point in the same chapter he writes, "Like Duddy Kravitz, Sydney Newman is openly a Jewish hustler, and like Duddy he has a knack for making people with artistic or intellectual aspirations appear impossibly fake." The word, I notice, is "aspirations", not "pretensions" – so apparently anyone who is intellectually ambitious (Freud? Sartre? Einstein?) is "impossibly fake," in Knelman's cosy, smug, middlebrow view. Ironically, *This Is Where We Came In* could use a massive infusion of "artistic or intellectual aspirations", for as it stands, it's an uninspired muddle.

The best chapter, in my view, is "Politics and Quebec", dealing with the films of Denys Arcand. Knelman's analysis of **Réjeanne Padovani** runs directly counter to my own perceptions, but he certainly makes an interesting case on behalf of the film. One chapter, and parts of others, do not make much of a book however, and the conclusion is inescapable: if a book like this were produced in any other field, except Canadian film, it would be dismissed. It would be practically unthinkable for a literary critic to publish something this slight and disorganized. Knelman had a good chance to produce something substantial; instead he settled for the merely serviceable. In recent years – since leaving *The Globe and Mail* – Knelman has tended to overproduce, spreading himself thin, writing articles on such subjects as beauty pageants, TV talk shows, and silly series such as *Custard Pie.* Whatever he has added in income, he has more than lost in prestige. None of us gain when such a basically talented writer becomes disconnected from his integrity. Knelman did not dive deep into himself to produce this book – in fact he has given very little of himself.

It's a sad commentary, whether on himself, or his subject matter, that he didn't even *try* to be brilliant. □

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Year 2 1978

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in release

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based on the novel by
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screenplay by Paul Gottlieb
directed by George Kaczender

starring
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Helen Shaver
Alexandra Stewart
Marilyn Lightstone

in post-production

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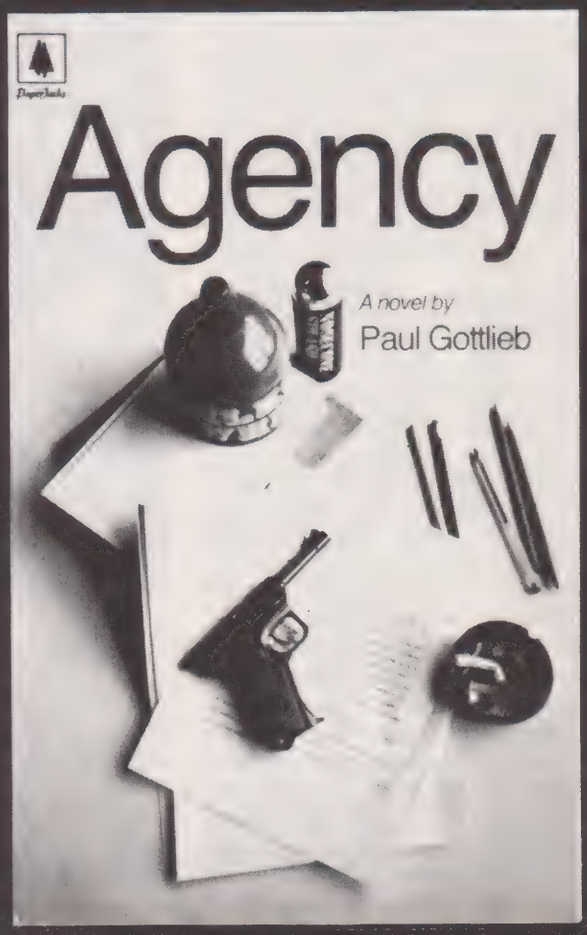

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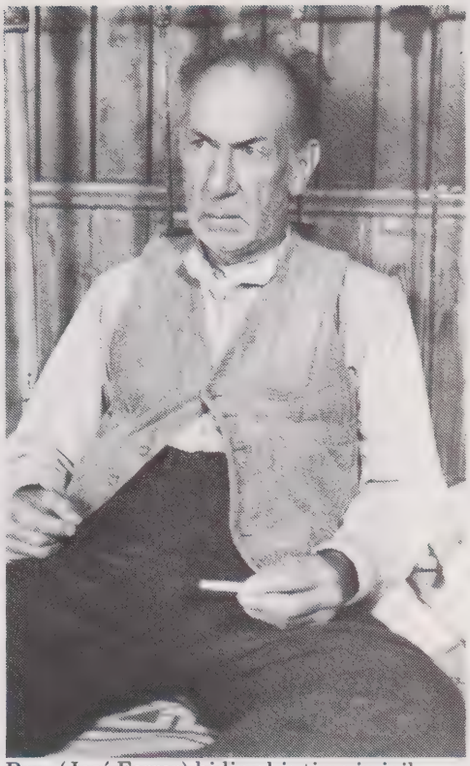
FILM REVIEWS

Allan King

Who Has Seen the Wind

d. Allan King, **asst. d.** Ian MacDougal, Rob Iveson, **sc.** Patricia Watson, from the novel by W.O. Mitchell, **ph.** Richard Leiterman, **ed.** Arla Saare, **sd.** Christian Wangler, David Lee, **a.d.** Anne Pritchard, **set dec.** Jean Berger, **m.** Eldon Rathburn, **cost.** Anne Pritchard, **l.p.** Gordon Pinsent, Jose Ferrer, Helen Shaver, Charmion King, Chapelle Jaffe, Patricia Hamilton, Gerard Parkes, Doug Junor, David Gardner, Tom Hauff, Brian Painshaud, **Production Administrator.** Monique Messier, **exec. p.** Pierre Lamy, **p.** Allan King, **assoc. p.** Gwen Iveson, **p. manager.** Gwen Iveson, **p.c.** Souris River Films Ltd., 1976, **col.** 35mm, **running time.** 100 minutes, **dist.** Astral.



Ben (José Ferrer) biding his time in jail

The film version of **Who Has Seen the Wind** is a statement of cultural failure. To translate a book into the language of the screen necessitates a comprehension of the medium you're translating from. That means an unavoidable critical engagement with the literary text. Because what has to be transferred from words to moving images is neither character and/or plot and/or theme and/or dialogue and/or incident, but the structure of feeling that is at once the core and culmination of all the novel's separate elements – the essential shape of the work's intention.

W.O. Mitchell's **Who Has Seen the Wind** is a quintessentially Canadian novel, both in its strengths and weaknesses, and an ideal one in many ways for a cinematic treatment. Its central brooding concern, in common with much of prairie literature, is the seemingly inalterable opposition between the raw vitality of natural instinctual life as represented by the prairie wilderness and the straightened exigencies of social existence embodied by the puritanical prairie garrison.

The symbolic geography of this conflict is well suited to visual depiction: the prairie town with its false-fronted buildings is a tiny artificial construct perched precariously in the midst of a turbulent sea of earth and sky, its strict geometry of streets defeated with startling suddenness by the curving edges of the grassland. Out of this setting emerge the human terms of the conflict.

Brian O'Connal is a young boy growing up during the Depression in a prairie town and torn between the claims of his animal birthright, innocent kinship with the vast amoral mysteries of the natural cycle, and his human destiny of suffering awareness and moral responsibility. Ranged about him are an array of characters who illustrate the spectrum of different accommodations possible between these rival claims. At one end, is old Ben, the town derelict and his attempt to obliterate in himself all that separates him from the beasts of the field. At the other stands the town's reigning doyen, Mrs. Abercrombie, in total rigidified absorption in her social role. The dilemma for Brian is to assume his full stature as a compassionate adult member of the community and thinking being, while at the same time maintaining his primal connection with the earth-sources of his existence. The schematics of the novel proclaim that such a compromise will be possible for Brian, but at a deeper level; the romantic and realistic elements in the work never get fully reconciled. It is in this lack of an energizing, felt dialectic between innocence and experience that the book is most profoundly a Canadian statement, an unconscious lament of impoverished cultural alternatives.

If the film **Who Has Seen the Wind** is any indication of the capacities of some of our best filmmakers to grasp literary meaning, then we're all in a pile of trouble. Except for that by-now obligatory tone of gentle well-intentionedness that distinguishes the Canadian feature film endeavor, **Who Has Seen the Wind** is as ramshackle and shallow an effort on a book as the most cynical paste-and-scissor made-for-T.V. assemblage perpetrated south of the border. Frankly, I hated the film with a passion – the passion one reserves, I guess, for the sight of lost and misspent opportunities.

The most we had a right to expect was that a first-rate creative imagination would actually improve the book, sear away the comic and sentimental evasions, heal the split between Mitchell's knowledge that a boy must grow into a man and his emotional commitment to childhood innocence, between his sense of nature as a beneficent mother and his knowledge that the natural processes wear an unremittingly alien face to the human mind. The least we had a right to expect was a competent transcription of Brian's dilemma of growth, certainly on the most obvious, visually accessible level of the clearcut opposition between town and prairie forces.

Removing the young child from the story is almost like removing the prairie itself. Except that for all the symbolic tension that director King and cinematographer Leiterman manage to create between the natural and human environments in the film, the prairie might as well have been omitted too. The intimacy and lush wilderness brings all distances near, familiarizes the alien – to such an extent

Film Credit Abbreviations: d.: Director. asst. d.: Assistant Director. sc.: Script. adapt.: Adaptation. dial.: Dialogue. ph.: Photography. sp. ph. eff.: Special Photographic Effects. ed.: Editor. sup. ed.: Supervising Editor. sd.: Sound. sd. ed.: Sound Editor. sd. rec.: Sound Recording. p. des.: Production Designer. a.d.: Art Director. set dec.: Set Decorator. m.: Music. m.d.: Music Director. cost.: Costumes. choreo.: Choreography. l.p.: Leading Players. exec. p.: Executive Producer. p.: Producer. assoc. p.: Associate Producer. p. sup.: Production Supervisor. p. man.: Production Manager. p.c.: Production Company. col.: Colour Process. dist.: Distributors. narr.: Narration.

that the prairie comes to seem a mere backyard extension of the town. What Mitchell's material needed anyway to counterbalance some of its sweetness was the correcting chill of clean, hard visuals, like those in **Why Shoot the Teacher** (which by the way is a vastly superior film on every count), conveying the unassimilable rawness of the prairie wilderness. In the context of this script, which gathers together the weakest, most cloying elements of both the realistic and the romantic strains in the novel, Leiterman's cinematography establishes an exterior setting that is highly oppressive in its confinement. Aside from a night sequence and a storm sequence that begin, at least, to approach, by the very nature of their content, the requisite sense of awe for the landscape, the prairie in this production wears a consistent pastoral golden glow that entirely subverts its meaning as the empire of the title's unseen wind.

The urge to domesticate pervades everything. The Young Ben, Brian's untamed alter-ego child-of-nature, is in the novel a semi-mythic figure, emerging suddenly on the horizon of the landscape as though he had come out of the earth itself. Handled poetically, in a somewhat surrealistic fashion, this character could have carried terrific impact on the screen. Instead, from the beginning he is depicted in totally realistic terms, close-up and accessible, so that the vital point of his difference from the other children and his joint link with Brian and the prairie is thoroughly obscured. Likewise, much of the ferocity and viciousness of the Old Ben is removed, even his run-down farm is polished into idyllic picturesqueness.

I could go on and on – because virtually every choice made in this film represents, from my point of view, a direct violation of the spirit of Mitchell's book and devastating incomprehension of the larger life-issues he is engaged in exploring. The principle of savage wilderness inside and outside the self that operates in polar opposition with the civilized values of the town and the adult mind, vitalizing them into significance, has been stripped away – and with it, the entire romantic, mythic dimension of the novel. What remains is the sentimental blandness of a maturity won without cost – a truly childish theme for adults.

Katherine Gilday

Ed Hunt's
Starship Invasions

d. Ed Hunt, **sc.** Ed Hunt, **ph.** Mark Irwin, **sp. ph. effects** Dennis Pike, **ed.** Millie Moore, Ruth Hope, **sd. ed.** Alban Streeter, **m.** Gil Melle, **l.p.** Robert Vaughn, Christopher Lee, Daniel Pilon, Tiiu Leek, Helen Shaver, Henry Ramer, Victoria Johnson, Doreen Lipson, **exec. p.** Earl A. Glick, Norman Glick, **p.** Norman Glick, Ed Hunt, Ken Gord, **p.c.** Hal Roach Studios, 1977, **col.** 35mm, **running time** 89 minutes, **dist.** Warner Bros.

Starship Invasions is a science fiction picture, shot in Toronto, which features a battle between two groups of beings from outer space. On one side are the villains, who are dressed in what appear to be converted football sweaters. On the other side are the good guys, who are meant to appear as humanoid creatures with bulbous heads but who look more like humans wearing clumsy prosthetic make-up.

The good guys with the funny heads ally themselves with a UFO specialist from planet Earth in order to defend the planet from the villains, who are led by Christopher Lee. Robert Vaughn is cast as the UFO expert, but in fact plays the role of Robert Vaughn playing Robert Vaughn, the actor waiting for the shooting to be over so he can get back to doing something more interesting, or at least more professional.

Christopher Lee, for his part, spends most of his time scowling, while other principals in the film pass their time lining up or standing around wondering what to do next.

These quibbles aside, Vaughn and Lee are strong assets to the film. Their names figure prominently in the film's print ads, and **Starship Invasions** was in its third week at Imperial Six in Toronto at the time of this writing.

The film's box office fortunes have likely been boosted by the success of **Star Wars** and the advance reviews of **Close Encounters of The Third Kind.** According to Hunt, however, he began his script in July 1975 and had gone through pre-production and had begun shooting before he knew about **Close Encounters** and had almost finished shooting before he knew about **Star Wars.**

Starship Invasions

By way of invidious comparisons, the special effects in **Starship Invasions** are no match for **Star Wars,** in which Douglas Trumbull and a multi-million dollar facility to work in, in contrast to the warehouse on Queen Street and an Arriflex and occasionally a Mitchell used by Dennis Pike for the special effects for the **Starship** space battles. (The live-action flying saucer shots were executed by Warren Keilor using a matte-glass technique.) Nor is the $1-million budget a match for the $19-million of **Close Encounters.**

In scripting, the effects of insufficient funding for script development during the eight dry months that Ken Gordon and Hunt sought initial funding are evident in the final film. For example, the flow of the storyline is often interrupted by meandering talking-heads dialogue... as in the conversation between Vaughn and the computer expert about the legitimacy of making a scientific study of flying saucers.

Nonetheless, the fact that Hunt was able to get Robert Vaughn interested in his script, and to put together a $1-million film with backing from Earl A. and Norman Glick of Hal Roach Studios, and to get distribution from Warner Brothers, is an accomplishment.

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Michel Moreau
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Jean Lepage
english-colour ● 10 minutes ● 1975
The viewer takes part in the preparations, efforts, joys and disappointments of young Québec athletes during the annual events of the Québec Games. The film, which moves at a swift, lively pace, won the highest award in the short subject category at the 8th Virgin Islands International Film Festival.

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Un petit canard pas comme les autres

Claude Roussel and Gilbert Gratton
french-colour ● 20 minutes ● 1972
If you adopt an animal, you become responsible for it. This is the story of a young boy who finds, looks after and heals an injured duckling. He then sets it free.
(Prize: Canadian Film Award)

White-tailed Deer

Bernard Beaupré
english-colour ● 11 minutes 48 seconds ● 1976
This film is intended to make known the deer-yard work of the biologists of the *Service de la Faune* of the *Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche.*

UMIMMAQ

Bernard Beaupré
english-eskimo-colour ● 26 minutes 50 seconds ● 1976
The musk ox has been imported into Québec and everything suggests that this animal, whose habitat is the tundra, will be able to survive here without difficulty. For eight years now animals have been raised at Umimmaquautik, where they are doing well and reproducing. In the film we witness the realization of the aim of the experiment, the adaptation of the musk ox to the Québec tundra.

Wildlife no 1

Bernard Beaupré
english-colour ● 26 minutes 50 seconds ● 1976
Film to make known the work of the research workers and biologists of the *Service de la Faune* of the *Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche,* dealing specifically with land wildlife.

Wildlife no 2

Bernard Beaupré
english-colour ● 26 minutes 50 seconds ● 1976
Film to make known the work of the research workers and biologists of the *Service de la Faune* of the *Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche,* dealing specifically with aquatic wildlife.

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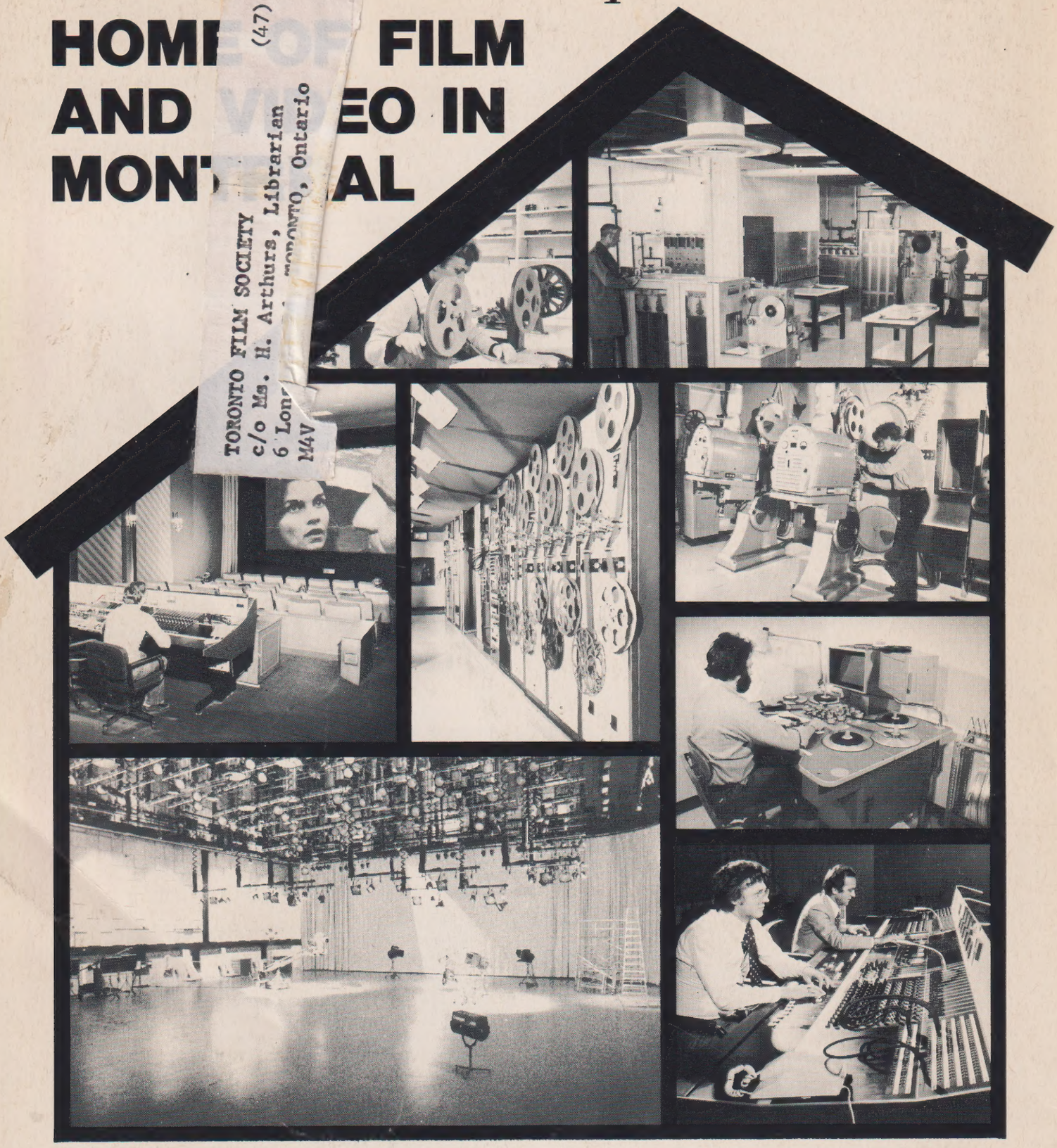

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